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Epist 554^e

Maintenon.

THE
SECRET CORRESPONDENCE
OF
MADAME DE MAINTENON.



Madame de Maintenon.

Engraved by R. Cooper.

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THE
SECRET CORRESPONDENCE
OF
MADAME DE MAINTENON,
WITH THE
PRINCESS DES URSINS;
FROM THE
ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPTS

IN THE POSSESSION OF
THE DUKE DE CHOISEUL.

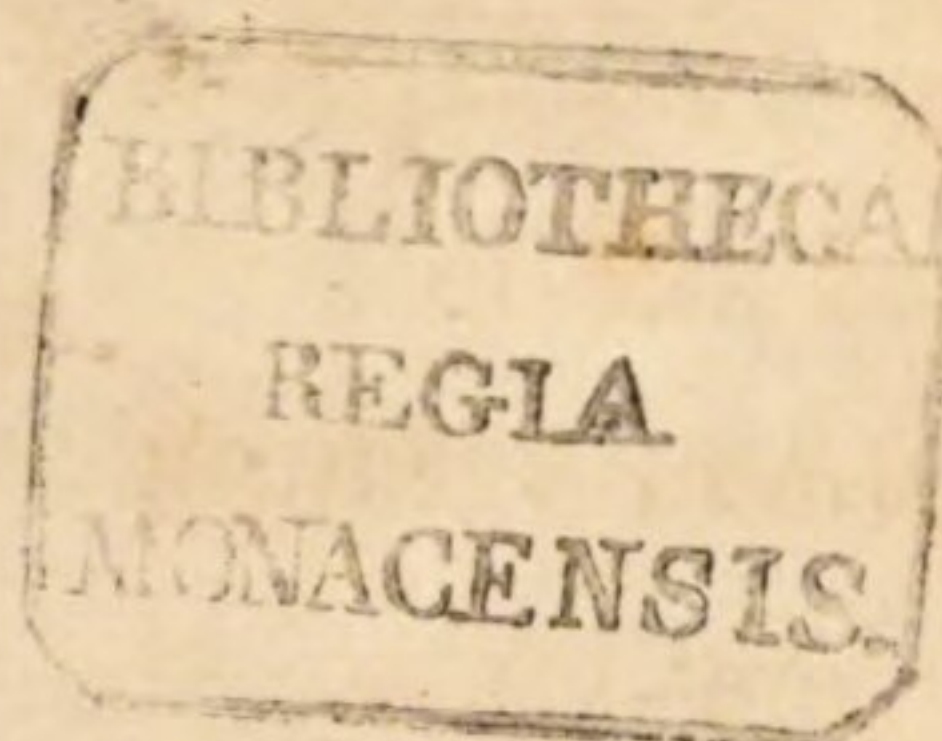
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IN THREE VOLUMES.

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PREFACE.

AMONG the most useful publications of the French, are their numerous memoirs. Those of Sully were the forerunners of many which have told mankind to measure the conduct of kings and courtiers by a truer standard than they were wont. The Duc de St. Simon in his memoirs, first published in 1788, has cleared up many uncertainties relating to the private and political conduct of his friend the Regent. The letters, lately re-published, from the Duchess of Orleans to Caroline, who afterwards became the wife of George II., exhibit a scene of depravity almost incredible, and wholly unknown in this country. Monsieur Lemontey's edition of the Journal of the Marquis de Dangeau, and the

Memoirs of Madame de Hausset, the attendant of Madame de Pompadour, with the present volumes, form almost a complete account of the reign of *Le Grand Monarque*.

The love of truth is a great distinguishing proof of superiority, therefore every work which draws away the veil of error, and exposes the naked facts, is useful, and generally interests the inquirer. Authentic and genuine accounts of the characters of kings, and the causes of their political conduct, are highly important, as affording examples by which monarchs may be warned, and subjects instructed—by which the enslaved may be taught the impotence of their oppressors, and be led to aspire to freedom—and the free reminded of the value and blessings of enlightened government, which ensures the preservation of property, liberty, and life. Such works teach us to be more contented with our stations, by showing us that the halo of a court only dazzles the sight, and prevents the passions, weaknesses, and misery of those it surrounds being seen.

A forcible exemplification of these truths is afforded, by the disclosure of the proceedings and

manners of Louis XIV. and his court. Parasites, and contemporary writers, either mercenary or deceived, have enveloped his conduct in false and brilliant colours, and given a surreptitious air of grandeur to his political career, and a frivolous tinsel to his courtiers, which has been mistaken by the many for elegance of manner and refinement of mind.

The works before mentioned, and these letters, will show that king and his court in their proper lights, and prove *Le Grand Monarque* to have been an ignorant, bigotted despot, the mere puppet of harlots, courtiers, and buffoons; and the latter, with few exceptions, a degraded and vicious race, the fittest train for such a king.

The writer of these letters was a character of no common stamp, because, in it all the leading features were, though of a secondary order, intensely developed.

Frances D'Aubigné was the maiden name of the celebrated Marquise de Maintenon. She was born in the prison of Niort, in 1685, where her father was confined for debt; and there she passed four years of her infancy. On his being released, he sailed for Martinique, and lived on a

small plantation for nearly six years, and then died. An aunt, professing the tenets of Calvin, became her preceptress ; but her mother being a rigid catholic, by perseverance and severity, compelled her to renounce her Calvinistic creed, and embrace that of Rome.

Although her family was impoverished, and her father unfortunate, she was honourably descended ; for her grandfather, Theodore Agrippa D'Aubigné, was one of the chiefs of the French protestants, and a correct historian of the civil wars. The house of Bourbon was indebted to him, and his coadjutors, for placing them on the throne of France ; a deed which has been repaid by intolerance, persecution, and ingratitude.

Frances was beautiful, and friendless ; these qualities attracted the attention of the deformed buffoon Scarron, then in repute for his parodies, and burlesque compositions. He proffered her his hand, fortune he had none, and she was induced to become his wife, for the sake of having a protector. Her natural disposition being cold and reserved, she easily assumed the appearance of austerity, and so retained a

blameless reputation. Notwithstanding her coldness and reserve, she was ambitious, and, as she has written, that “her desire to make a name was then her passion.” At the age of twenty-five, in the fulness of her beauty, with acknowledged talents, and attractive manners, she was left, by the death of her husband, without the means of subsisting; and was only relieved from this deplorable condition by a trifling pension from Anne of Austria, but which ceased with her life, and again reduced her to destitution. During the former period, she was admired by many, and the well-known Barillon was among her suitors. In the time of her adversity, she was received into the houses of the wealthy and the great, but not on those terms of equality which more prosperous circumstances would have commanded.

Mademoiselle de Montespan, at that period the reigning favourite of Louis XIV. knew how to value her talents and discretion, and being desirous that her children should be secretly educated, determined to commit them to her charge. The king, who had conceived a great dislike to her, as being a pedant, was long before he yielded

to the solicitations of his mistress, but at last he settled on her a pension, and consented to her becoming the governess of his offspring.

Now, placed where she could exert her talents to ensure her fame, she did not allow the opportunity to escape, but calmly decided on the course she would pursue, and pursued it with untiring determination. She opposed his dislike by silence and submission, and obtained his respect, by the strict performance of her duties. Madame de Montespan was violent, and capricious, while her conversation was tinctured with levity. These errors the governess soon perceived, and noted their effects on the monarch. Being well-informed, and endued with reflecting power, and almost grave in her demeanour, she, with great circumspection, and uncommon tact, followed a course the exact reverse of the proud Montespan, and thus gradually weaned the king from her, who found solace in conduct and conversation so precisely opposed to that from which he often suffered.

Madame de Montespan soon perceived that she had fostered a rival, and yielded to all the

asperities which jealousy and fear had excited, and so played her rival's sagacious game. Whether Madame de Maintenon was actuated by sincere regard for the welfare of the king, in her great exertions to correct his vicious propensities, or whether she was so skilled in the knowledge of the human mind as to be aware, that a woman has no surer powers than those she skilfully uses for such ends, must ever remain doubtful. Charity would lead us to conclude in favour of her good intention, while her declared ambition, and known dissimulation, would tend to induce the belief that she acted from less noble motives. Be that as it may, her object was obtained, for she withdrew the king from Madame de Montespan, and excited in him affection for his converter. Her ambition was now stimulated, and she added the fears of religion to her advice, and so wrought on the monarch, that, after vainly endeavouring to break the spell, he secretly married her, after she had attained her fiftieth year, and he had entered his forty-seventh.

The Duc de St. Simon was not her friend, and, therefore, his descriptions of her method of managing the king must be read with some

degree of caution; but as he was a man of high religious principle, they are worthy of credit, and are certainly amusing. The Duc thus paints a cabinet scene, which is so broad and general in all its parts, that it may be said to be a counterpart of many more.

“ On the days of business, Madame de Maintenon, in whose apartment the ministers transacted affairs with the king, sat by, reading or working tapestry. She quietly heard all that passed, and rarely threw in a word. The word was still more rarely of any consequence. The king often asked her advice, addressing her in a playful tone, as your solidity or your reasonableness. She answered slowly and coldly, scarcely ever betraying a prepossession for any thing, and never for any person; but the ministers had their cue. If by chance the king at first fixed on her candidate, it was well, the ministers were sure to agree; and they contrived to hinder the mention of any other. If he shewed a preference for any other, the minister read over his own list, rarely recommending any one directly, but hinting at the objections to all, so as to leave the king perplexed. In this embarrass-

ment he often asked the advice of the minister, who, after balancing the good and bad qualities of all, shewed a slight preference for one. The king hesitated, and frequently in that stage referred to Madame de Maintenon ; she smiled, affected to be incapable of judging,—said something in favour of another candidate, but at last, sometimes slowly, as if deliberating, sometimes, as if by sudden accidental recollection, returned to the candidate whom she had prompted the minister to recommend ; and in this manner she disposed of all favours in France.”

It is evident that Louis sometimes suspected that he was being influenced, and then he became restive ; which was a warning to Madame de Maintenon and her minions to be more circumspect. His anger was always submitted to with tears and apprehension, and she seemed deeply anxious to recover the degree of ascendancy which she possessed before the rencontre.

It has been remarked that the qualities of her mind were not of an uncommon order, but that each of the prominent faculties was very powerfully possessed by her. They appear to have been extreme circumspection, capability of re-

flecting on the past, and considerable foresight of results. Her affections were cold, and she became the wife of Louis to gratify her ambition, and not to possess the object of her affections. A fair reputation was always prized by her at its proper value, and she maintained it, and used it for her personal advantage. No glow of feeling seems to have ever warmed her bosom, and even her sentiments of justice were often sacrificed to policy, for she owns that she did not attempt to arrest the cruel persecution of the huguenots, because Louis had been informed of her having once professed their tenets: that circumstance, she says, "induces me to approve measures most opposite to my sentiments." Her great caution was the consequence of unusual timidity, which was again evinced by her selfishness. Racine wrote, at her request, a pamphlet on the general distress and famine, which excited the enmity of the king against him, but she had not nobleness of spirit enough to defend him. She never interceded in favour of the exiled Fenelon, when her wish would have been equal to a command. And she left her king and husband on his death-bed, when she could not be any longer useful, and

might endanger herself. She did not hear of his death until the evening of the second day after. She gratified her ambition, but did not obtain happiness ; for she lived in an atmosphere not congenial to her nature, and longed to return to the class from which she rose.

Madame de Maintenon is not to be severely censured for not possessing the full development of the higher faculties ; Providence had not bestowed them on her, and her earliest education, and the former part of her life, were not calculated to improve even the portion which she possessed. In a word, she was a cold and prudent woman, who does not appear to have committed any active injuries, or perpetrated any resentments, but was too selfish to exert her power to do good. Her sins were rather those of omission, than of commission ; and though she can never be loved or admired, she may be justly deemed respectable, and, perhaps, among the most deserving of the favourites of any king.

The Princess Ursini, or Ursins, to whom the letters are addressed, was a native of France, and the widow of two husbands of the families of

Talleyrand and Ursini. In her second widowhood, she was sent to attend on the Princess of Savoy, the Queen of Philip, and through her to manage the Spanish monarch.

LETTERS

OF

MADAME DE MAINTENON.

LETTER I.

TO THE PRINCESS DES URSINS.

Saint Cyr, May 31st, 1706.

I DID not expect to have had the honor of writing to you to-day, and I sent to the Queen to say so: but on leaving this, I received a packet from M. Amelot, of which it is necessary I should acknowledge the receipt through you, not having the courage to address him under such melancholy circumstances. I had seen his letter in the hands of M. de Chamillard, who did not seem to be dissatisfied with it; though he may have been sometimes hurt at seeing himself pressed for things which he could not perform. You see too

plainly, that the troops are wanted everywhere. The ill-fated day of Flanders will affect you in a variety of points; but to return to our ambassador, you may assure him that since he has been in Spain, I have not seen a movement of the King, of which he would not have been perfectly satisfied; the public do not cease to applaud all he has done, and they are not so unjust as to blame him for want of success: it would have been desirable for you to have had him sooner. I see with sorrow, that you think the King could not adopt a worse plan, than entering Spain by Pampeluna: it is, I believe, pretended, that there was no choice: in effect, every thing goes wrong, and you may well imagine I do not flatter myself with regard to the future. The King bears all like a great man—but he suffers. He was at first much hurt to hear it said that his house had done nothing worth naming; he is very much alive to the honor of the nation. It is certain that there were corps which did not act well, and that the disorder was great: as to the body guards, they were overpowered by numbers. Poor Madame de Soubise saw enough, in seeing one of her children killed, and the other wounded; the Duke de Guiche performed wonders at the head of his regiment. You ought to be complimented on the nomination of Cardinal de la Tremoille; this name honors the dignity more than it is honored by it. The Duke de Noailles is named a lieutenant gene-

ral : I am assured he would rather not be so, and that our officers would go on better without him. I do not know what we shall do with our Princess, it does not appear to me, that her constitution can sustain so much grief; the Queen is never named without bringing tears into her eyes; she feels all the King's pain; I never saw any young person of her age, capable of such acute sorrow; her goodness of heart will render her unhappy; she is to be bled on Monday; the King will also be bled on the same day, by way of precaution. Believe me, that the general state of affairs does not prevent me from often thinking of our own situation, or from pitying you with the warm attachment, which you know I entertain for you.

LETTER II.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, June 5th, 1706.

I DID not believe that the bad state of our affairs could be exaggerated, and yet this has been done, by telling us that the army of the King of Spain had been defeated. The Marquis de Brancas had told me that the Duke de * * * * had given you an account of every thing, so that I hope you had formed no desperate resolutions

on the first news ; but what have we not to fear from the effect which will be produced by that of Flanders ? It is necessary to adore the will of God in all things : our two kings support religion and justice, and they are unfortunate ; our enemies attack both one and the other, and they triumph ; God is the arbiter. We are much afflicted, and very uneasy on your account ; the march of the King of Spain cannot but be long, and there are many things to apprehend.

Yes, the Queen certainly merited a better fate : Madame de Brancas has told us new wonders of her ; but all is not lost, and she is still young enough to witness more than one revolution. M. de Chamillard has been in Flanders ; his journey will be useful : he has given exact details of the unfortunate day of the 23d. He has supplied the fortresses, and our troops will re-assemble. Do you think there is a more unhappy man on earth than the Marshal de Villeroi ? Every thing seems to be against him ; his best friends agree at least, that he is not fortunate, and that this is a great defect in a general. It appears to me, that we suffer according to the rank of those who most interest us : I have not sufficient resolution to write to the Queen ; her last letter has cost me many tears ; and what are words to express the part I take in her troubles ? It is impossible to comprehend where all this will terminate. The Duchess of Burgundy is

suffocating with the vapours; the King is courageous, and a Christian; and as for me, Madam, I am a woman, and one of the weakest.

LETTER III.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, June 20th, 1706.

THERE is no longer any source of joy, and I dread every fresh article of intelligence; it seems to me that we can receive no more good news from any quarter, and yet, if you can maintain your spirits until our army joins the Duke de Berwick, the confidence I have in that general makes me entertain a little hope.

The designs of God are incomprehensible; three Christian kings appear to be abandoned; heresy and injustice triumph,—let us hope that this will not be for a long time.

The Queen of England came from St. Germain to Marly yesterday; she is very well; her illness is no longer of any consequence, and never were the effects of the regimen which has restored her to health more apparent, especially since she has had nothing but troubles. The King, her son, will be of age to-morrow; he is growing, and becomes

very like the King, his uncle; the Princess will be as tall as her mother; she is very clever.

I should be very glad, were it possible to be so, to see you satisfied with the Duke de Noailles; I think him a very good man, and his merit renders him more dear to me than the honor of his alliance.

The King has received many thanks from you on the cardinalship of your brother; he would wish to afford you still greater satisfaction; he is, thank God, in perfect health, and supports every thing that happens with great courage.

But, what do you say of the Marshal de Villeroy? Was there ever a more unfortunate man? This is the only excuse of his best friends; there are several of those who have written to him, advising him to ask leave to quit the army; the court, the city, and foreigners, join in the outcry against him, and say that all is lost if he remains where he is. M. de Marlborough says he has done that in four days, which he would have been satisfied to do in as many years.

M. de la Feuillade has made an offer to the Princesses of the royal family to leave Turin, and seek a place of safety wherever they like. The Duke of Savoy had anticipated his messenger, and replied that the Princesses were much obliged to the King, and wanted nothing; declaring that he will be buried within the walls, and that

the first who talks of surrendering shall be despatched on the spot.

What a cruel war is that which arms the sister against her brother, a father against his children, and subjects against their legitimate princes! Our Duchess of Burgundy suffers greatly from this state of things; I am very much alarmed for the safety of her infant. I stand in great need, Madam, of your firmness and capacity; I always see you sympathising with your amiable Queen, and full of apprehension as to the future. May God protect you!

LETTER IV.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, June 27th, 1706.

I DID did not receive any of your letters by the last courier, and was extremely sorry for it, as I really feel a great want of them; it is a consolation for me to be encouraged by you, or to sympathise with you; I think the latter will be our lot; for the future it will require miracles to repair the effects of what has happened in Flanders. Those who have read more than I have, say that there is scarcely an example of so prompt a revolution. Our friend, the Marshal de

Villeroi, is in despair, and with too much reason ; but his sorrow is deep and silent, and he is insensible to the palliatives which the King wishes to offer him. I never saw him more affected than he has been at what he was obliged to do on this occasion ; but he could not really dispense with it : there never was such general discontent, and it was the greater from being expressed with moderation ; for it has not been said that the Marshal was negligent, disaffected, or indifferent to the interests of the King ; but little esteemed in the army, and unfortunate in all that he undertook, although exposing his person with a bravery which none have disputed. On which ever side one turns, there is cause of regret. I fear that your troubles augment, and that you will be required to put all the virtues you have received above others, into practice. The Abbé Testu is dead ; I have also lost another friend in M. de Montchevreuil ; the Marshal de Villeroi has lost his mother ; these three persons had passed their eightieth year, When I retire to Saint-Cyr, I see the two young women who have the most merit, and whom I like the best, dying of asthma. These are strange things to treat of with you, but what would I not confer with you about, entertaining all those sentiments towards you, which would induce me to open my heart in any situation ?

LETTER V.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, July 4th, 1706.

I HAVE to reply to two of your letters, one of the 17th of June, and the other of the 24th. Behold you relieved from uncertainty and out of Madrid; this is a great step, and you know all the consequences of it better than I do. I hope you are by this time at Pampeluna; it appears to me that you will be in security there, until our troops join his Catholic Majesty. But our enemies are very strong on every side, and each failure weakens us. Your Spaniards betray, we are abandoned by our Flemings, and God seems irritated against us. The Marshal de Tessé has done his best in an enterprize that was not to his taste; he was unfortunate, and he ought to be consoled. It was wished to do the same for the Marshal de Villeroi; and if you knew the marks of friendship which the King has shown him on this occasion, you could not avoid blaming your friend for having received them so coldly as he has.

For myself, I dared not write to him, when I saw the manner in which he replied to the letters of the King; and I could not believe but that mine would be rejected with still greater severity.

The Marshal is only accused of incapacity and misfortune. The King had seen so clearly the little confidence which the army had in him, that he was forced to make this change, and would have always repented had he not made it. I saw the violence which the King did himself on the occasion, and his friendship for the Marshal is still greater than I thought; there was neither intrigue nor cabal in all this, I can assure you.

These changes of generals cause fresh embarrassments. M. de Vendome quits Italy, and afflicts the army by his absence, at the same time that the Prince Eugene receives an augmentation of troops, and that M. de Savoy has left Turin to strengthen him still more by his presence and his cavalry.

The Marshal de Villeroi, incensed and disheartened, remains for some time charged with the difficult affairs of Flanders; the Marshal de Villars has made so many representations to avoid going to Italy, that the King has consented and sent M. de Marsin there: they are so distant from each other, that a great deal of time must elapse before they reach their respective posts.

Confidence has been restored at Paris, and in the army of Flanders, since the nomination of M. de Vendome: God grant that he may accomplish all that is expected from him. He will do all he can, but our affairs are in a sad state.

I now come to your letter of the 24th: behold you out of Madrid, without knowing when you will re-enter it. It is no doubt for the best that you have been advised to go to Burgos: but to judge from the conclusion of your letters, I think you will prefer Pampeluna, and it appears you will be in greater security there until our troops arrive. You truly foresaw that you might find yourself in great extremities, and very far from what you would have been at Rome; but could you wish that the amiable Queen were without you? She has renewed her thanks to the King, her grandfather, for having sent you to Spain, and seems to feel what you sacrifice for her. You are very cunning, if the Chevalier d'Espennes says the truth; and the two kings whom you betray could not do you more harm than the princes whom you serve. Whatever comes from this monster is worse than can be conceived, and it is afflicting to see Frenchmen capable of such actions. You may readily judge of what I suffer in knowing you are, with the Queen, in want of every thing,—I, who feel pity for the meanest sufferers. The Duchess of Burgundy read me your letter yesterday, and it cost us many tears: it grieves me very much to see this Princess so deeply afflicted during her pregnancy; she has, however, great courage to repress it before the world; but the kindness with which she honors me, induces her to treat me with the

greatest openness. It is very probable that the Cardinal Porto Carrero has not good intentions in having refused you your only resource; the English would not consult such people; thus the Cardinal takes this aid from the King, and gives it to his enemies.

I am much afraid that the Queen's jewels will not be very highly estimated, and have no doubt of the difficulties of finding money and getting it paid.

I feel great esteem for the ladies who have followed the Queen; grant that it may be in his Majesty's power to recompense them! What an extremity to have left some behind for want of a hundred pistoles to give them! I know not what to say between the anxiety I have to receive your letters, and that you should devote the time occupied in writing them to your own repose, do at least as you have done this time, by referring the King to the letter which you did me the honor of writing to me.

LETTER VI.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, July 11th, 1706.

I do not know which is the predominant feeling with me; the impatience of hearing from you, or

the fear of receiving bad news : your affairs are in such a convulsed state that I fear it is but to flatter myself to hope for their successful re-establishment ; and yet, if our troops are somewhat numerous, and led by a King, and a general like M. de Berwick, why should they not beat their enemies, who have a great number of militia and Portuguese, that are not much more esteemed ?

I received a letter from you the day before yesterday, dated on the 13th of June, and which reached me through the Duke de Noailles ; I felt that it was really wanting, and that you had passed very lightly over our concerns in Flanders : but it is the subject of your letter of thirteen pages, which is so full of your grief at that event, that I thought it my duty to renew the subject to the King on your part : I assure you he is fully persuaded that you love the state as a true French woman, and that you are attached to his person, particularly since you have known him better, and seen what are his sentiments on all that you have treated, especially towards yourself. Be tranquil as to the King's health, it was never better : he does not think himself so necessary as you say, but I hope God will preserve him to us.

You now know that the consequences of this ill-fated day have been a thousand times more unfortunate than the loss of a battle ; we were so overpowered by it, that we have scarcely felt the

joy arising from the pregnancy of the Duchess of Burgundy, which goes on very well, and with the greatest attention on her part.

The Count d'Egmont distinguishes himself so much that we daily learn new traits of his bravery, and fresh praises, which I do not hear with indifference. I am very much pleased with all you say in favour of the Duke de Noailles; I think he has merit; he would have served better in Roussillon, if it could have been possible to leave him the troops that were there: but we are menaced on so many sides, that all cannot be supplied. It is said that the Prince Eugene is resolved to attempt every thing for the relief of M. de Savoy. I should wish him to make this effort while M. de Vendome is still there; but he will perhaps wait for his departure. It is a great misfortune that he quits Italy; but the army of Flanders has made it the subject of great rejoicings. I have some verses on my table, which I had not the courage to send you, and I know not whether I shall put them into my packet. The same opinion continues to be entertained of the ambassador; and your assistance is a great consolation in the unfortunate affairs which he has to manage. Might I venture to entreat that you would offer him a thousand compliments and friendly expressions on my part? I shall, during my whole life, cherish them towards him for his merit and the services he has rendered. I am

not so tender with regard to the Cardinal Acquaviva. Why do you wish to make me acquainted with him? Do not you know that I am unable to write to such people? I scarcely understand his letter. He will always please me very much, so long as he is attached to our two kings. When he is at Rome I shall have little to ask him for. I conjure you to tell him all that I ought to write. I have neither strength nor courage but for you. It seems to me that he is fully justified in the mind of the two kings, as to what his enemies wished to say against him. I hear nothing said, except on this head, and your testimony leaves no doubt on the subject.

The Chevalier d'Espennes would be happy were he mad; he is a monster, who ought to fill every honest mind with horror.

I am sure that the cardinalship of your brother has not turned your brain: but I am delighted with all that brings you nearer the King.

We have seen the jewels you sent, and not with an eye of indifference. Every body was affected by the sight, according to their own way of thinking. There will be some difficulty in getting rid of the pearls and diamonds, owing to their extreme beauty. It appears to me, however, that they will be taken care of for you.

The siege of Turin seems more difficult every day. It must be made under ground, and this

work is slow: there are not many people in the fortress. The royal princesses are at Genoa.

What joy, Madam, if you beat my Lord Gallo-way, and if we beat the Prince Eugene! The misfortune in Flanders would thus be a little repaired. M. de Vendome is to pass by this place on the 20th. The Marshal de Villeroi will not quit his post till the former joins the army. It is said he is still in the same state of despondency.

The decision of going to Burgos has been very much approved of. God grant that you may not leave it, except to return to Madrid! The Marshal de Tessé has been treated with the kindness which you know the King possesses. After this letter, do you wish me to write to the Cardinal Acquaviva?

LETTER VII.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, July 18th, 1706.

At length, Madam, we received news from Spain yesterday, and they are still bad, as we had a right to expect. What a spectacle to see the Queen experience the overthrow of a kingdom at the age of eighteen, and herself wandering to seek some place in which she can be re-

ceived. But it is still more surprising that she sustains her situation with the submission and courage you tell me : is it possible that God will abandon her ? And yet it seems to me very difficult to flatter ourselves with any hope ; if you lose a battle all is lost ; and at the present moment if you do not give one, you will perhaps also lose every thing, though more slowly. May God inspire the King and M. de Berwick ! I always maintain that they ought to be allowed to proceed in their own way, and that it is impossible to conduct matters at such a distance ; *we have experienced this but too truly*. I cannot help telling you, though without being charged to do so by any person here, that M. and Madame d'Alba, display great zeal for the two Kings. They are sincerely beloved and esteemed in this country, and heartily cry long live Philip V. and the Queen ! of whom she relates wonders. The Princesses Royal are at Oneille, and not at Genoa. Up to the present time, the Duke of Orleans sends from Turin to say that the siege will still continue a long time ; so that I am greatly afraid numbers will fall, as well by the sword as those maladies which are likely to follow. What a cruelty is war,—to see all these princes persecute each other, and cause so many human beings to perish ! I am very melancholy, and foresee nothing but disasters. I should have hopes on your side if our troops were in a good state when they join the King ; but this is not probable. The Chevalier

d'Espennes is a monster ; he cannot be called otherwise. I will make known your kindness for the Cardinal de Janson, whom I expect at Marly. The most unhappy of all men, Madam, is the Marshal de Villeroi ; he refuses the only consolation he can have from the goodness of the King, who is not changed towards him. He could not avoid doing what he has, and you would have advised it, had you been here. I am so oppressed with troubles, that I feel this circumstance somewhat less than I should at another time. I am, however, sorry for the cold and indifferent manner in which the Marshal treats his real friends. Grant that you were quietly settled in the kingdom of Italy ! God alone knows the result of all these unfortunate affairs. I believe you suffer much ; but I cannot imagine that you wish the Queen, whom you love so tenderly, were at Burgos alone. I lately saw M. de Cailus, who asked me how our court was satisfied with you, and adding the reports spread at Paris, stating that you were worse than ever ; and that these reports gave great uneasiness to the Duke de Noirmoutier, to whom you write very seldom. I told him all I knew, and how well I knew it. I also charged him to give the account to your brother. I admire the rage and harmlessness of these newsmongers ; but, madam, we have now other crosses to carry.

The King is in perfect health ; our Princess is less

incommoded than at her first pregnancy. How sorry I am that your Queen is not in the same state! The Castilians would be still more affectionate.

LETTER VIII.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, August 1st, 1706.

As a cold in my eyes may prevent me from writing to you with my own hand, I do so while I am able; and I write such long letters that I should fear to importune you, if I had not great confidence in your goodness towards me. On reaching Versailles yesterday, I heard a letter read from the Marshal de Berwick, which made me breathe a little as to Spain. I see he is sure of beating the Portuguese; but you give me details which are much more agreeable, and which encourage us to hope for every thing, if you can enter Madrid.

France will long feel the effects of the affair of Flanders, and I am not astonished that it should have affected the Castilians; such a disaster, joined to all the suppositions of the enemy, is well calculated to make every body despond; and

in truth, Madam, our King is the only person whom I do not see overwhelmed. M. de Vendome arrived yesterday, fully assuring us that Turin will be taken, and that Prince Eugene cannot relieve it: he has, however, made a considerable advance. It was thought here that there would be a general action. M. de Vendome thinks not, and that the nature of the country does not admit of it. I do not feel his confidence to an equal degree on the affairs of Flanders; and I am not at all surprised that he finds it much worse than he had figured to himself. He will remain at court to-day and to-morrow, and set out on Tuesday for Belgium. Judge, Madam, what will be the feelings of M. de Villeroi on placing the command, it cannot be said, of an army in his hands, for there is none left, all the infantry being distributed among the fortresses, which are menaced by the enemy, and there is only some cavalry remaining; this too is much separated, though easily assembled. I do not understand M. de Villeroi; he bears his deep sorrow without saying a word, appearing to occupy himself with trifles, and the hopes of justifying himself. We shall see him most probably towards the end of the present week. The idea of his first interview almost kills me with fear. I think it will be necessary to send him your letter; and that he will be less angry with you than he appears to be with all that are here.

A great clamour prevails against the generals the moment they meet with the least misfortune. Every body has broken out both at Paris and the court against the Marshal de Tessé; and I know perfectly well that he deserves no blame in the affair of Barcelona. The King has treated him very kindly; and I will let him know your obliging efforts to justify him. The Marshal de Villars is most at his ease. It is said that he is making a great deal of money, and he has not much to do, for the Prince of Baden is extremely weak.

I thought, Madam, that the misfortunes of our general affairs occupied people sufficiently, to prevent your enemies from thinking of you or your ambassador. Nevertheless I hear that they are circulating a report at Paris of your being on very bad terms with the King; that we have all renounced the good opinion we had of you; that M. Amelot is a fool, who writes letters and makes ridiculous harangues, which are in the hands of all the world. Whatever contempt I may have for these reports, I cannot prevent myself from being put into a passion by them, and I quarrel with all those who hear them with coolness. I assure you that there is not the smallest foundation for all this; that the public does not cease to sound your praises, and are perfectly satisfied with all you do. You know my sincerity,

and I should be incapable of telling you what I do, if I had seen the least umbrage since your departure. I can easily believe that they would find it difficult to accuse you before me, for I am a declared admirer of yours as well as your ambassador.

It is with great difficulty, Madam, that I can be gay while speaking of your present abode ; and I lament all the conveniences by which we are surrounded, when I reflect that a deal table now serves every purpose. The Queen is admirable, and laughs at it ; and yours is an amiable disposition, to accommodate itself to such an apartment, after having inhabited the finest palaces of Rome. But the hope of seeing you return to Madrid consoles me a little.

You did me a great pleasure in sending me the letter from Seville, as for that of the Chevalier d'Espennes, I hope it is only a copy, as I should feel horror in touching the original.

We are in considerable alarm for a descent on France : the pains taken by the enemy to embark several regiments of refugees, and to have put the Abbé de Bourlie, another monster of our age, at their head, leaves no room to doubt but it is intended for us, in the hope he has given them that all the new converts will revolt the moment they put a foot on shore : many persons maintain that descents in our ports are very

difficult; we shall soon know what we have to depend on.

The pregnancy of the Duchess of Burgundy will take us to Fontainebleau on the 30th of this month, to return sooner, in order that she may keep her bed at the time it was required at her first accouchement. We shall leave Meudon, that she may embark at Paris and sleep at Corbeil, so as to reach Fontainebleau the next day. The King not being able to have her with him, will go alone, and on the same day each of the Princesses will proceed in their respective directions; and old as I am, I shall also go in one day with Mesdames d'Angeau and d'Heuricourt. Our Princess is greatly delighted with this journey, and is equally pleased at the idea of taking all the ladies with her. She will have a magnificent barge, followed by several others, for carrying the refreshments and all the articles she may require for her amusement, without any additional expence; but she will not be joyful, for scarcely a day passes that she does not shed some tears about the state of the Queen, the Princesses Royal, and her brothers; but I find that the tenderness she had for her father diminishes a little.

LETTER IX.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, August 7, 1706.

WE are in hopes of gaining a battle, and in great impatience to receive the news. Your last letter, Madam, makes me shudder, in telling me that the crown, and even the life of the King of Spain, are in danger ; your Queen has written one to her sister, which has greatly affected me by its pitiable contents. We really cannot be said to exist in such agitation, and yet it has continued four or five days. The Marshal de Villeroi arrived last night, and saw the King in my room. There was only the Duke of Burgundy and myself present. The interview was gloomy, though full of marks of kindness on the part of the King ; he brought the Marshal for a moment to where I was. Our Princess being no longer there, he asked leave to come and see me here, and I expect him. He met M. de Vendome on the road and wished to see the Duke, as he bears no ill will towards him ; it was not so with M. de Chamillard. He is going to Paris for three or four days, and will return to assume the Marshal's staff and his duties. I fear he

will meet with a great deal of unpleasantry on the part of the courtiers, with whom he has no reason to be satisfied.

M. de Vendome has greatly consoled us as to the affairs of Italy ; he thinks Turin will not be relieved, and that it will be taken by the beginning of September. We are still uneasy about the fleet, which has not yet departed. The trench was not ready before Menin on the 4th of this month. Our army is assembling, may God protect it ! It is true, Madam, that the King is much in want of hearing some good news : he is truly alive to the glory of his grandson, and is anxious for his return to Madrid ; nor will the satisfaction of the Queen be indifferent. I cannot believe but that God will declare for them ; we have not ceased to pray for their interests here ever since the day of Saint James, when especial prayers were begun at Saint Cyr.

August 8.—I saw the Marshal de Villeroi yesterday. He was much afflicted, but very sensible of the kindness shewn to him by the King ; he is soured against many individuals, and I fear there are some who interfere between both parties to increase the dispute. I was yesterday told that the English fleet does not put to sea till the 10th, and that the trench was opened before Menin on the 5th.

LETTER X.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, August 14th, 1706.

BEFORE replying to your two last letters, I must say a word on the joy we experienced at the late news from Spain: I was delighted to perceive that of the King and the Duchess of Burgundy, on hearing that you were in a state to return to Madrid whenever you pleased.

You give me pleasure in allowing me to esteem the Castilians, and we derive great satisfaction in thinking of their transports on seeing you again. This commencement of prosperity makes us more impatient to learn the results. It is fortunate that the Portuguese cannot enter their own country, but they will join and augment the troops of the Archduke, who I should like to see shut up in Barcelona, not daring to hope for more.

All Paris and the whole court were enchanted at being able to breathe: you know, Madam, that the French pass very suddenly from one extreme to the other. It is thought that every thing will go on well in Flanders since the arrival of M. de Vendome; he cannot, however, prevent

the enemy from taking Menin. God send that it may not be soon enough for them to commence another siege.

There seems to be no longer any doubt of the capture of Turin towards the end of this month; in order to relieve it, Prince Eugene must beat the Duke of Orleans.

M. de Pontchartrain has sent to inform me that he has received every thing which you wrote to say you would send him, that he has even put them into his packet: I sent them to him without telling him I had seen them already; he writes to me on the subject with great zeal and respect for you. There are only a few ill-natured persons here who appear to give any credit to the foolish assertions of the Chevalier d'Espennes.

M. and Madame d'Alba are transported with joy, though in a very different manner. The Duchess of Alba was at M. Chamilland's when the courier from Spain arrived: she left it to run to the King; they found her on her knees in the gallery, without knowing what was the motive. I had seen her at my house the preceding evening, and I assure you she speaks in a manner highly satisfactory to me, though I am rather difficult to be pleased by the parties in question.

You spoil every thing, Madam, by making apologies, after having given me commissions:

yes, I will certainly send you many others, and you can make no use of my services, of which I shall not feel highly honored. On reading your letter of the 6th again, I find that you complain of having to give an account of your conduct, with regard to the Chevalier d'Espennes: it appears to me that you only answer him, because you wished to do so, and that the blackest malice cannot say a word against your actions. At all events, I must profit by the joy which the news from Spain has given me, to tell you something which I have heard about you. A lady informed me a few days ago, that those who wished to break off the understanding and intercourse with which you honor me, were very sorry to see me so loudly profess the esteem and consideration I have for you, I dare not say the tenderness, and yet I assure you, that it amounts to that; the person in question, told me the last report, which you will find doubtless rational and probable: it is said, Madam, that my simplicity is such as not to see that your design is to bring the King and Queen of Spain back to France, where you will take my place with the King, either by embroiling me at court, poisoning me, or waiting for my death, which cannot be very distant. This is what is called, having views! Will you justify yourself, on these points?

Madam de Cailus is very much alive to all that

relates to you. I owe her this testimony with you. The Marshal de Villeroi is to have the staff and resume his ordinary duties to-day.

LETTER XI.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, August 22d, 1706.

MENIN cannot hold out much longer, and we shall see what M. de Marlborough will do. I greatly fear the confidence of M. de Vendome. Prince Eugene is marching to the relief of Turin, and the Duke of Orleans follows him. M. de la Feuillade pretends that there is nothing to fear; but you know, Madam, that I am not to be convinced.

We yesterday received letters from the King of Spain; the Archduke has joined and strengthened your enemies, another subject of alarm, at least for me: it is said the fleet is to put to sea on the 19th of this month; my terror on this subject overwhelms every other; the papers say it will visit the coast of Poictou or Guyenne.

I expect M. Orry, who wants to see me, whom I did not wish to see, and whom the Marshal de Villeroi forces me to receive, by threatening

me with you, Madam: but there are few things which I refuse in your name.

I see clearly, by the reports which have reached me from Paris, that your enemies do not maintain the silence I thought they did. They greatly exaggerate the hatred of the Spaniards for Orry, and the blame you deserve for supporting him.

What a time since we have heard from you! Great interest is felt here in all that regards Spain since the peaceable re-establishment of the King and Queen, and even to your stay at Burgos, whence they wish to hear of your departure for Madrid. The King is in perfect health, and the Duchess of Burgundy is also quite well: we have reason to hope for a happy accouchement.

LETTER XII.

TO THE SAME.

Meudon, August 29th, 1706.

NOTHING can be more affecting, Madam, than what you tell me of the Castilians. The address of your good curate has made me shed tears as well as you: what would I not give to see these poor people in repose with their King, and that he would show them he is satisfied with their fidelity! It is said, the fleet sailed on the 22d, but there is

nothing very certain on this head; they say it has only eight thousand men embarked, and that an equal number is to join them, if their first attempt succeeds. I am assured that there is no person among them, who is not fully acquainted with the plan: the circumstance of embarking the newly converted, and M. de Bourlie, makes me think that it is intended for us, and I know not what to fear, whatever they do; for if they go to Cadiz, or to strengthen your enemies, you will still find yourself in difficulties. We are waiting news from Italy with impatience; the siege of Turin goes on slowly. I have just seen an officer who comes from Flanders; he thinks Turin will not be relieved, and relates wonders of the Duke of Orleans.

Do not be uneasy about the reports, I entreat you; I scolded M. de Torcy some days ago, at his supposing, from a letter of the ambassador's, that he would again meddle with the detail of places and governments to be given away: he replied, that M. Amelot had been informed of all that was received, but that nothing was decided on, except by his advice, and that it had been thought necessary to tell him what they heard from an officer whom it was intended to put into a place of importance. The King is perfectly satisfied with him and you; I would not tell you so if I did not know it to a certainty.

You have judged rightly about Menin; it was impossible to resist the dreadful artillery of the

enemy. It is said that Caraman could not act otherwise than he has, at least without losing the garrison; and the capitulation is more advantageous than some days of further resistance.

I had the honor of replying to you about the Chevalier d'Espennes; I have read what you tell me of the Marquis de Leganez, to the King. M. Orry came to see me at Saint Cyr; we spoke of you with pleasure; he will tell you, no doubt, what he related of the Duke of Alba; these people are much esteemed here for their fidelity to their King, and for their noble conduct in all things. There is a little disorder in your letter; I know not whether some pages were not forgotten in making up the packet, but it is not connected; this has never happened before.

The King went to the Hotel of the Invalids yesterday, with no other design than to please M. Menseard, who has completed this work; but it was a fine sight: the King, followed by the royal family, and all the court, entering into one of the finest establishments in Europe amidst all the soldiers; and music blended with trumpets and cymbals; the Cardinal de Noailles reading mass; I have no doubt but that all this was very grand, for you may well suppose I was not there; our dear Princess remained here alone taking care of herself for the journey to Fontainebleau. Her conduct is more prudent than could be hoped from her age, and it is rendered still

more so, by her wishing to see all that is passing. The journey to Fontainebleau is broken off for the present, on account of the duchess of Burgundy; the person who is to attend her accouchement says that her infant is so placed, that there would be great risk in removing her; upon this opinion, the King has decided not to go at present. Monseigneur sets out to-morrow with the Duchess de Conti, and we return to Versailles.

I cannot believe, Madam, that you could think your letters fatigue me: they can never be too prolix, provided they do not fatigue yourself: do not therefore make any other rule when you do me the honor of writing to me: take care of yourself in preference to every thing else, and believe my attachment for you sufficiently strong not to require excitement by any new marks of your kindness. This answers to the last letter I have just received from you, of the 19th. Very little of the reports of your enemies reaches me; but I assure you, that they cannot injure you. M. de Torcy showed me this morning, on bringing me the despatches of M. Amelot, a letter of thanks for the confidence which is placed in him, and of the satisfaction felt at all his conduct; this minister sees with what care and anxiety I attend to the affairs of Spain: and which I tell you, much less to enhance him in your eyes, than to tranquillize your mind. I conjure you and your ambassador to confide in me: for however

great I may deceive myself, it is not possible for me to be ignorant of what the king thinks of you. I will avail myself of your advice to do something for M. Amelot, when the occasion presents itself.

I have told you all I know about Turin; I will consult the king concerning the favorite of the Duchess of Maine, and cause the other affair to be arranged with the Marshal de Tessé.

LETTER XIII.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, September 5th, 1706.

ALTHOUGH I am greatly afraid of battles, Madam, and especially since our misfortunes began, I am sorry that the Marshal de Berwick could not attack the enemy, and I am persuaded it was impossible, because I cannot doubt his inclination to do so; but your affairs will go on very slowly, and this is not the worst of what we have to fear.

We are much the same: nothing is decided either about Turin or the fleet. M. d'Orleans and Prince Eugene are at the former place, and we are in momentary expectation of important news from that quarter. You will have heard from M. Amelot, that the Queen Dowager is to be

sent back to France: the ambassador is not capable of proposing a harsh measure. I hope, from all my heart, that he will always agree with you, and that you may never be of different sentiments. The step taken with respect to Orry has surprised us, but it is necessary to refer to those who are on the spot.

Although the Marshal de Villeroi is on duty, I do not see him the oftener; it occurs to me that he is too much overwhelmed when dejected, and too insensible when gay. I am delighted, Madam, that the first news I gave you, made you laugh, and our great Queen also: grant heaven that we had but such matters to talk of! But I could wish you to treat every thing which comes from your enemies in the same way, and which seems to me to merit as little attention. I make no reply to M. Amelot: I content myself with watching over all that regards him; I could only offer him my compliments, and I reserve myself for what is more necessary.

M. de Torcy has given the letter to his Serene Highness; he thought it should be thus managed. I have seen the Prince: he spoke much of you; I informed him of your tyranny towards me with regard to foreigners, and that I found you too much affected by the reports of your enemies: it appeared to me that he wished to write to you on the subject. It is no laughing matter, Madam, to be in the continued state of inquietude in which

I am: the affair of Turin seems to be very important. I cannot understand its being taken without a battle; and what ought we not to fear after all the misfortunes that have befallen us? M. d'Orleans would not hesitate to sacrifice himself there; he is as brave as a lion, and never sees danger.

The Princess d'Harcourt has lost her son in Italy: he died of the small pox. The Princess de Vaudemont speaks in the highest terms of him, and seems much afflicted. All that I hear from M. de Vaudemont proves great zeal for our two Kings. I say nothing to you about the Duchess of Burgundy, because I have the honor of sending news on the subject to the Queen. I do not tell you, Madam, how often we speak of you, and the joy we feel in having a person like you near the Queen, who is so much in want of counsel and consolation: I cannot believe that you would not wish to be there, however much it may cost you. I assure you Madam, you would be very wrong to wish to get rid of me, and that you have no one who is more sincerely attached to you than I am.

I often call to mind your person and that amiable countenance which used to charm me at Marly. Do you preserve the same tranquillity that enabled you to pass from a conversation of the greatest importance with the King, to the playful jokes of Madam d'Audicourt in my study? I have just reperused a letter from the Queen, to which I have

not replied : it relates to the bad offices which your enemies wish to render you, because you are not attached to the two Kings : I assure you, that these reports are regarded like those of the Pont Neuf.

LETTER XIV.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, September 12th, 1706.

WHEN you write to me in joy of heart, Madam, you afford great pleasure to mine, especially if your affairs go on rather better. It is to be hoped they will not proceed so tardily, for I am still afraid of the fleet for you : we can scarcely comprehend its delay. I think the Queen Dowager will be better in France than Spain ; for, without knowing her private character, it appears to me very probable that she is in the interest of the Archduke. There is no appearance of our having any good news from Turin ; the length of the siege and sickness have weakened our army, and Prince Eugene is very near the Duke of Orleans. My God, Madam, how tedious all this is, and how difficult to come to a conclusion ! and yet M. de Vendome has a very fine army in Flanders, and burns to do something : but the King thinks

it will not answer to risk every thing at the end of a campaign. We have been much surprised to see M. Orry countermanded, but we are cheered on perceiving that it has been done in concert with you : I should be truly sorry if you thought differently to your ambassador, or if he differed from you ; I hope to find letters from you on reaching Versailles this evening. The King calculates on setting out to Fontainebleau on the 23d of this month ; he goes there out of complaisance to the Dauphin, and from charity to the inhabitants of that place, who will be ruined if he does not go ; the Court will not be so brilliant as usual, for our Princess shines there greatly, and she will remain at Versailles with a number of ladies, so that we shall be alone and afflicted at being removed from her. The King is more sorry for it than I should have thought, and he would not have been so, but for the two reasons I have stated. The Duke of Burgundy will also be there ; but I doubt whether he will remain three weeks without taking a turn to Versailles.

Yes, Madam, I forgive the Queen for loving you too much ; she cannot carry her friendship too far, and I am greatly obliged to you for confiding it to me. Certainly the two Savoyard ladies would turn the heads of our Princes if they wished it. I sincerely pity the King of Spain, to be separated from her he loves, without being consoled for it by a

battle. I do not merit for myself, Madam, that you should have any friendship for me, but I am really worthy of some from the manner in which I am devoted to you.

LETTER XV.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, September 26th, 1706.

I HAVE no difficulty, Madam, in agreeing as to the merit of our two princesses: it seems to me that we do not enjoy all the blessings of fortune at once; their conduct is really surprising: God bless them! they are in want of courage. You are greatly afflicted, and you know still better than I do, the consequence of so many reverses. I have the honor of asking the Queen for the details of this unfortunate day: the letter you receive will explain matters much better than I can. The Duke of Orleans is in despair; they write to inform us, that the wound in his wrist is very dangerous, but that the agitation of his mind is his greatest evil. Nothing can equal his situation: if his counsels had been followed we should, to all appearance, have beaten Prince Eugene, whose army was weaker than ours; if, after the loss of Turin, we had marched towards Milan and

rejoined M. de Medavid, Italy would not be lost, and from the measures which the Prince has been made to adopt, all will be lost unless miracles are performed. You will have heard that M. de Medavid has defeated the Prince of Hesse: he can throw himself into the fortresses of the Milanese. The King has received this news with his usual firmness. M. Chamillard is furious; I do not think he can long resist, he suffers from so many quarters; for myself, Madam, I only support these causes of suffering to exercise my patience, which is often worn out. It will be very prudent not to expose yourselves by leaving Madrid a second time; I never see the extremities in which the Queen is placed without thinking of her situation if you were not with her; but I can easily conceive that with such succour every thing will be supportable to her. I also think that the repose you would enjoy at Rome is not to be compared to the gratification of forming the heart and mind of a princess who will always make a great figure in the world.

When I speak to you of M. and Madame d'Alba, I have no other object in view than to inform you of what passes here, and to do justice to the truth: they never asked me to render them any service; I have nothing to propose for them. I will not even say any thing to the King about what you do me the honor of writing on that subject; I should be afraid to create some

embarrassment; if you wish to do them a service, you know better than any one on earth what is likely to answer the purpose. The following is what M. Orry has related to me during the visits he has made here, when expecting to go to Spain: having heard that the Duke d'Alba had sent to sell plate to the amount of ten thousand crowns, he called on him, and said that he did not offer him any of the money he was taking to the King of Spain, that prince being too much in want of it, but that he begged the Duke would at once accept a thousand louis d'ors, and afterwards the forty thousand crowns, which he knew how to get back from His Catholic Majesty; the Duke replied, that he would be very sorry to ask the King his master for money at a time like the present; and that he would most willingly give him some if he had it; that at all events, he felt hurt at the offer of M. Orry: for, as his wife had still some jewels left, when these were gone, they could live on chocolate, of which they had a stock for two years.

We were much surprised to see Orry countermanded, and I was greatly afraid that this measure had not been sufficiently concerted with you: but, Madam, your candour, good sense, and amiable disposition, agree with every thing, and you on all occasions do that which is most proper.

There is an open war declared between the

Marshal de Villeroi and M. de Chamillard, which quite afflicts me : it seems but little becoming two men so attached to the King, nor have I as yet seen any appearance of softening them.

It is certain, Madam, that there was great disorder in the letter I received from you at Meudon : Mademoiselle d'Aumale, who is my secretary, and myself, read it over several times ; some leaves were wanting. Although I am not naturally suspicious, I closely examine your packets ; they are always well sealed : you often put them into those of the Queen, and I do not know who would be bold enough to open a letter from the Queen of Spain to the Duchess of Burgundy.

However much I may dread battles, I should like to hear of one in Spain, for the reasons you have pointed out, but I am far from seeing my hopes accomplished.

We begin to have no longer any fears of the fleet for ourselves, but we are afraid on your account. You speak to me of the Duke of Orleans in a way which obliges me to give the news concerning him somewhat in detail. The heroes of romance do not carry their courage farther than he has. He concealed his first wound, but it was necessary to cede to the second, as his arm fell ; he supported his pain with the same courage ; he caused himself to be conveyed in a litter with the design of marching

forwards. I had the honor of telling the Queen that his advice was not followed, on which account he is inconsolable, and all the officers send to say his life is endangered by his affliction. The King has written to him in a manner the most obliging: in truth, he well deserves it.

It is because the Marshal de Villeroi is in quarters that he does not see me, for he never quits the King except when he is in my room. I can easily imagine that you are tranquil at Burgos; I do not attach much importance to distance, and would rather be in a cave with you than in a fine room with some ladies I see here; but as to public affairs, Madam, it is necessary that the Queen and you enter into them for all your life. The Duke de Grammont has always appeared to me, as to yourself, very much interested in the concerns of Spain.

The Cardinal de Noailles tells me the Cardinal de la Tremoille is very anxious that an ambassador should be sent to Rome, and that he finds every thing there very difficult; you may judge whether the event at Turin will render matters more favourable. All your efforts to strengthen our party there, proves your zeal for the two Kings.

The Cardinal de Janson is very fortunate to have nothing more to do than enjoy the fruits of his labours: I am charmed to hear that he regards his relative as a monster, for I have so

many examples of the force of blood, that I was afraid he had become your enemy.

LETTER XVI.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, October 2nd, 1706.

You will have seen, Madam, that I had reason to fear for Turin, and that raising the siege would have been a trifling misfortune compared with all that has happened. M. de Vendome, who so ardently wished for this enterprise, believes all that he wishes. It is true our troops were superior, and what is surprising, is, that they are so still, but the measures were badly taken every where: you are already informed of all, and it is needless to speak of the past, but to endeavour to support the present, and to hope for the future, that God will not abandon our two Kings. The wound of the Duke of Orleans was terrible, and the danger greater, from his not being able to console himself for his misfortune. Madame told the King yesterday, that she owed her son's life to him, for the obliging letter he wrote to the Duke, and which in reality caused the wound to change in a surprising manner. All those who

surround him are most anxious to return to Paris, they remain at Grenoble, not being able to come nearer; but that is neither the intention of the King or the Prince: and it is very certain that, as soon as he can be removed, he will enter Piedmont. The Duchess of Orleans yesterday charged me to tell the King, that she did not wish to be troublesome when her husband was in a distant country, but as he had come to Grenoble, she wished for permission to be near him. She was praised and refused; I think this was all that could be done.

The Portuguese will be punished sooner or later for the barbarities they exercised on the monks of Salamanca. The Queen is admirable, to feel these things so differently to what the great are usually accustomed.

I cannot enter into the repugnance you have for public affairs: the Queen and you are formed to meddle with them, but what makes me uneasy about Madrid is, that the enemy do not leave you there in peace.

All our court is very well satisfied with the Elector of Cologne, and I think he will be so with the manner in which he is treated. He wished to see me, but fortunately, Madam, you are not here.

LETTER XVII.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, October 10th, 1706.

I DO not remember to have passed any Sunday, Madam, without writing to you. There is no misfortune that can remove me from you, and it appears to me that by approaching you even in the way I do, I always acquire more courage. The interests of the King and Queen of Spain scarcely affect me less than those of France, and although I think of them incessantly, I cannot conceive how all this will be unravelled. You are indeed to be pitied, you who are a good French woman and a good Spaniard. After all it is you that consoles me.

I have already told you that our King is always the same, whether it regards the health of his person, the tranquillity of his mind, or equanimity of his temper, but I see from more than one symptom that the bad news we receive is still worse in the end than when first sent to us. Our army, which was superior, is reduced almost to nothing by the number of maladies, desertions, and yet more through the impatience of the officers to return to France: there is something so

afflicting in all that has occurred for some time past, that we might despair if we did not feel that all these circumstances came from the same hand. It is much if the kingdoms of Naples and Sicily remain faithful to their King.

I have closely examined the conduct of the Prince de Vaudemont, and seen how near he was to be embroiled with our two Kings : they are very unhappy, Madam, in not being able to act for themselves, for they are often cruelly deceived. The Marshal de Villeroi has greatly contributed to prove the innocence of M. de Vaudemont ; nothing can equal what he has done, and all he still proposes for not abandoning Italy. You will learn from persons better informed than I am the steps to be taken on that subject. I will profit by what you say, to be more than ever on my guard against all that people say and write. We hear nothing more of the Queen or you ; it appears that your ambassador continues to give satisfaction, and you may rely on it that I watch over all that concerns yourself. It is true I declare myself so strongly for you that your enemies will not perhaps tell me all that is said in public, and I can assure you that up to the present moment, there has not been a cloud on the mind of the King in any thing that regards you.

LETTER XVIII.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, October 17th, 1706.

THE Duke of Orleans is very well, and we wait his next accounts to know whether he is to enter Italy or not: there must be great difficulties in this, if he does not surmount them. The Prince de Vaudemont omits nothing to facilitate the means of doing so. The Duke of Savoy has been very ill; the last news says he takes Peruvian bark, which induces a belief that he is out of danger.

I cannot, Madam, wish you the repose of Burges. God has not given you all the talents you possess to do nothing; I think you will not be less favourably received at Madrid than the King has been: heaven grant that you may not leave it again! All that you think of M. Orry partakes of an uprightness very uncommon in courts. It is true, that the hatred between M. de Villeroi and M. de Chamillard is very disagreeable to me; but it is not easy to make passionate people hear reason. I cannot believe that the Marshal de Berwick had not strong reasons for declining to give battle; except this, your affairs do not appear to be in a

bad state provided, your enemies do not receive fresh succours. I well remember that you sent me a letter for the Marshal de Tessé when I was at Meudon; the Duchess of Burgundy undertook to deliver it to him.

Mademoiselle D'Aumale has been educated at Saint Cyr. She is of the same family as the wife of Marshal Schomberg, who would, I think, be very much disconcerted to see a young lady of his name with me: I also find it disadvantageous to her; but not being able to give her a fortune equal to her birth, I endeavour to make her pass her time agreeably, and I think I have a right to treat the pupils of Saint Cyr as my children: if this one had the honor of seeing you, she would be truly grateful for all you desire me to tell her.

You are very right in wishing for a good choice in the ambassador to Rome, it would be difficult to find one among our great lords. The Duke de Saint Simon and the Marquis D'Antin were proposed some time ago: it is pretended that the Jansenists opposed the first, and the contrary cabal the latter: I do not suspect them in the least of professing any particular doctrine, but they say I am a dupe in many things, and that may be easily the case, for I am not distrustful. We have the Elector of Cologne here, and with whom all the Royal Family are charmed: I never saw them so much so with any foreigner; they

say he is the least embarrassed and least embarrassing prince in the world. There is quite a contest for his society : the King takes him to hunt to-morrow : he has also remarked a great deal of taste in all he saw here ; he gives the prize to the house at Trianon and gardens of Marly ; he cannot contain himself with regard to the King : he has told him that he wished his enemies knew him as he really is ; all that we hear on this subject induces us to perceive that strange notions are entertained of the King. The Elector is to prepare for his return to Flanders to-morrow, and is very well satisfied at not being obliged to go to Rome.

It was my intention to have the honor of writing to the Queen, but I am still very weak, and the least effort I make in this way throws me into a perspiration. I have had the fever and acute pains during three weeks, and this, joined to the present state of affairs, does not agree with a susceptible mind and feeble frame. The Queen has reason to pity the Duke of Orleans ; his dejection has greatly augmented the malady : his wound has been twice affected with gangrene, and they wanted to take off his arm : the letter he received from the King operated as a wonderful balm, and he has been getting better ever since : he certainly deserves to be consoled, and I have no doubt but your Queen will contribute all she can towards it.

I am delighted, Madam, at the confidence the Queen places in God ; I hope he will not abandon such pious princes, and whose cause is as just as their lives are innocent : it appears to me that a pregnancy would attach the people still more to their majesties. In order to give myself an agreeable idea, at least for a moment, I figure to myself the Queen's entry into Madrid. There can be nothing added to the fact of our Princess taking every care to ensure a happy accouchement ; she is pretty well, but her dejection is extreme ; she is attached to her father, but feels great resentment against him, and tenderly loves her mother : she takes as great an interest in the affairs of Spain as those of France. She loves the King, and cannot see him a little more serious than usual without shedding tears ; and by an excess of goodness, she interests herself in all my sufferings ; I should wish to console her, and yet I often afflict her. This situation is very terrible for one of her age, and who, though she does not say so, has, I think, some uneasiness about her accouchement, and the fear of having a daughter.

It is said that the Pope has sent a jubilee to the whole Christian world . let us hope that so many prayers will be favourable to legitimate kings and the protectors of religion.

LETTER XIX.

TO THE SAME.

Versailles, October 24th, 1706.

IN the midst of all our misfortunes, I am very glad to perceive you have confidence in God: nothing is more consoling or excellent than what you say on this subject, nothing less than miracles will serve us, but God is all powerful, and our cause is just.

It appears to me that the Duke de Grammont does not spare you bad news, and that if they can be exaggerated, he will do so. I do not as yet know what will be decided with regard to Italy; there are great difficulties in re-entering it. If the Queen Dowager of Spain judges the ladies of the French court by the Duchess de Grammont, she will have a strange opinion of them; I do not know her; it is said she is not destitute of some talents, but that her manners are low, forward, and those of a person who has not been brought up in good company. She governs her husband most imperiously; she might have acted an amiable part in making him live on terms with the Duke and Duchess of Guiche, who conducted themselves with admirable prudence in

this unfortunate marriage, but it is said this woman wishes to ruin the duke, and she can do so if she pleases : so that I do not think the family of Noailles were pleased to see her so intimate with you ; I should not, however, wish to commit myself by what I now say.

At all events, you may believe the Duke de Grammont's word, with regard to his wife ; he has clearly proved his knowledge of such merchandize, and you cannot doubt his discrimination.

I see with great pleasure, the kindness and esteem you profess for the Duke de Noailles ; I think him a very good man : he will be here in December and January.

The comparison of La Perlis with you, Madam, is not altogether just ; there is no queen who ought not to think of what the Queen Dowager told you ; but they will not be fortunate enough to find persons like you : these are still more rare than queens. I am truly sorry for the misfortunes of the great, who have none near them but those who sacrifice them to their passions.

M. de Mursay is a brave man, and very much attached to the public service ; but he does not merit the honor you do him ; he is a prisoner at Turin.

You may calculate, Madam, that I feel towards you, as I had the honor of telling you. I do not foresee that I can ever change my sentiments ; but should this happen, I assure you, that I will tell

you so, with the motives which I may have ; never doubt, therefore, till then, that I am not entirely yours.

Permit me to request, that you will assure the ambassador, that the King is very well satisfied with him, and that I admire him more and more every day. The last news from Spain is tolerably good ; but while our good fortune is small, our misfortunes are at their height.

LETTER XX.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, October 31st, 1706.

I HAD hoped, Madam, that we should have heard of the Queen's arrival at Madrid last night ; but we have received no news from Spain that has come to my knowledge. There will be less every where at present. The armies of Flanders are going to separate, and all our officers are about to return ; it is to be wished that they were less anxious to do so. Everybody is tired of the war, and the men wish for peace as much as the women ; it would be difficult for it to be carried on to our satisfaction, unless God, who can change our situation in a moment, should interfere. I was told some days ago, that you were

coming back immediately, because the King of Spain sent to the Queen to warn her against taking you to Madrid. I cannot as yet comprehend what vengeance there is in circulating reports which destroy themselves before they are established ; but certain persons think otherwise ; they wish to injure the Queen more than you, when they show such great anxiety for your quitting Spain. We are to have the Duke de Noailles here at the end of the month ; I shall give him great satisfaction when I inform him of the esteem with which you honor him : it is a long time since I saw his mother ; she is still at Paris on account of the Duchess de Guiche, who has, however, had her accouchement. At length our Princess approaches her time ; she is about to enter her eighth month, and from her great care she is still able to move about, see the King, and sup with him ; she goes to bed a few hours after dinner, and has given up visiting Marly. We are going there on Wednesday to pass the anniversary of Saint Hubert ; after this, I do not think we shall return there often, for the King finds great difficulty in passing his time without the society of the Duchess, and in leaving her alone.

LETTER XXI.

TO THE SAME.

Versailles, November 7th, 1706.

ALTHOUGH I have no longer any pleasant subject to treat on with you, I suffer much from not receiving your letters; two couriers having arrived without bringing any. I never followed up a correspondence with so much zeal, nor have I ever had one so useful or agreeable. Your letters communicate something of yourself; I find in them that sort of courage which supports everything, without being dejected, and that happy disposition which prevents you from seeing anything in a sorrowful or gloomy light. In fact, I always find myself better when I receive a letter from you, and there are none which I do not read over several times. How fortunate is your amiable Queen in her calamities, to have you near to aid and support her; and how much do your enemies wish to injure her, when they want to remove you from her! Our officers are returning from Flanders daily, but we shall not have M. de Vendome so soon. The Duke of Orleans is also coming back; all this only tends to renew our uneasiness as well as their own.

The Duchess de Duras was delivered to-day in two hours; I should wish for the same facility to our Princess, provided it is not a girl; I have scarcely courage enough left to wish for any thing, for it appears to me that we hardly know what we want. In whatever humour I may be, I am always equally yours.

LETTER XXII.

TO THE SAME.

Versailles, November 14th, 1706.

I write a few words, Madam, in order that an opportunity may not pass without your hearing from me, for I keep my letters for the courier of M. Amelot, and he will arrive sooner than usual; this is the reason that the Duchess of Burgundy does not write by the same conveyance; she is in good health as well as all those for whom you feel interested.

Saint Cyr, Same day.

I HAVE to reply to three of your letters, Madam, the first is from Rosas of the 26th of October; I am still weak from three days of fever, and which returns at this time every fifteen days. Mademoiselle d'Aumale is ill; but I do

not want for a secretary here, and I will answer for this one as I do for the other.

I have taken a great interest in the joy of the Queen; she requires that God should interfere to relieve her situation, which up to the present seems to have been truly unfortunate: your own, Madam, does not appear enviable, except in the services which you continually render a princess, who merits all the tenderness you feel for her.

The Pantheon of St. Denis is a place well calculated for serious reflections; poor Queen Louisa has done better to die than live. It seems to me that every body approves of your not recalling all the menines; they are less necessary to the King than troops, and a conjunction like the present was necessary to get rid of them. I have no doubt but the grandees will murmur; curtailments are approved of generally; but no one in particular wishes them to fall on himself. As I never lose sight of your interests, I am delighted that you have no longer three hundred women to govern.

I think with you, Madam, that your blood and mine are often heated; but whatever it costs me, I feel myself much honored in being compared with you.

Let us pass to that dated Madrid, October the 27th. The affection of the Castilians greatly increases my esteem for them; but nothing will afford me enjoyment until peace is made, and it

may easily happen that even the peace will not delight me: there is up to the present time no appearance of it; our enemies are inflated with their good fortune. Heaven will punish them for it perhaps; there is no place but Spain in which our affairs go on well. I have always the heartfelt hope, that God will protect the innocence and piety of their Catholic Majesties.

It is said that the Duke of Savoy and Prince Eugene are on very bad terms, because the Emperor has not performed all his promises to the former; I hope he may open his eyes, and recognize his real interests.

I assure you, Madam, that I have no design in speaking well of the Duke and Duchess of Alba; when I want any thing from you, I shall say so very frankly; I am, however, very glad to hear what the King of Spain has done for them. I have not as yet complimented them on it. You perhaps know by this time that we cannot enter Italy before the spring: we should have been there still if the officers had been as well disposed as their general.

I have seen this general, who is greatly afflicted at his misfortune, and very ardent to make up for it on a future day: his health is good, but he will have one or two fingers of his left hand crippled.

I now come to your letter of November 3rd, also from Madrid. I admire your finding time to

write to me in the press of affairs which surround you : I entreat you, however, never to do yourself any violence, to give me the pleasure of hearing from you ; I prefer your repose to the consolations it affords me to receive your letters. Why are your ladies of the court so sorrowful? Are they grieved to see you again? I should be very angry with them if they were.

If ever I had wished to see the Elector of Cologne, I could not, for I was very ill while he was here ; but I confess to you, that if I could I did not wish it. I become indifferent to society, and it is no longer the time for me to make any new acquaintances. I feel, however, that I should not have resisted had you been here, but I should have been well recompensed in the pleasure of seeing you, who could soften my sufferings in many respects.

I have read all the praises contained of him in your letters to the King, and the copy of that which you have written to M. Orry : your frankness and sincerity cannot be sufficiently admired ; the King is as much affected by them as I could wish, and I assure you, Madam, this is to say everything.

God grant that M. de Vendome does not flatter himself, when he tells the King of Spain that he will very soon enter the Milanese ! We shall soon know what to think of this.

I had some conversation about you a few days

ago with the Duchess of Burgundy, and concerning the reports circulated from time to time, that you are embroiled at one time in France, and at another in Spain; I am charmed with the sentiments she entertains towards you, for she not only believes your merit to be extraordinary, but thinks you very amiable, and really loves you.

I do not wish you all the fatigues you undergo; but it is inseparable from your situation, and it would be a pity for you to be idle; but I would consent if your amiable Queen were not to suffer from it.

I shall know to-night, on reaching Versailles, whether the courier of M. Amelot has gone; in that case it will be necessary to send my letter by M. Torcy; can you have any motives to distrust him? I think not. I feel for you, Madam, as for myself, and I should be afflicted if I were not one of the three women of whom you speak to M. Orry, as those upon whom you calculate.

Versailles, 14th October.

P. S. The courier of M. Amelot is not gone; I will give him my letters, as he will arrive before the ordinary one, though he does not set out so soon. I have just spoken to the King again, about the ladies of the court who have been dismissed, and he finds all your arguments very just.

LETTER XXIII.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, November 21st, 1706.

WE have no news from you this time, and there are none to send you : everybody is coming back, and the court is quite full. M. de Vendome will soon return. There is nothing thought of but warlike projects, which makes me tremble. If they lose the hope of entering Italy, we shall have plenty of troops for Spain. But how is it possible not to fear a campaign, after that out of which we have come ? Do you preserve, during these events, that tranquillity which I envied you at Marly ? For myself, I cannot conceive how I resist my agitation and years. We must hope in God, and pray to him incessantly. I do not know whether people will have the courage to enjoy themselves here, even when our Princess is in a different state ; her mind seems to me less disposed than her body ; and the interest felt by her sister the Queen, is what affects her most. M. de Mursay has died of the scarlet fever at Turin. It is said the air is infected there by the great number of deaths : we lost nearly twenty

thousand men during the siege. Madame de Cailus is greatly afflicted ; she was very fond of her mother. I am in an interval of health which is not likely to last long. We are more and more satisfied with your ambassador ; and as to you, I have heard nothing since your return to Madrid. There is nothing talked of here but intrenchments. The King tells the Duke of Alba that he wishes to follow the example of his grandson, and expend nothing more except in war. You will see by this that what has been done with your menines is not disapproved of. The King cannot decide on going to Marly without the Duchess of Burgundy, so that we shall thus be deprived of it all the winter. You no longer speak to me of the Queen's health : I augur well from this.

LETTER XXIV.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, December 5th, 1706.

YOUR friend, M. de Pontchartrain, has sent me the packet you addressed to him for me. I will take care of that with which you honor the Duke de Noailles, who has not yet arrived. I know nothing of M. de Torcy with regard to you :

do you wish me to ask him the cause of his coldness? It is some time since I have heard any thing of the reports of your enemies. It is true I am known to be so zealously devoted to you, that they dare not speak before me. Would to God that my letters were of some use to you! Neither sickness nor old age can interrupt the intercourse which you have so kindly wished to have with me. I beg of you, however, not to write to me with your own hand, but to spare your eyes as much as possible. You cannot too much despise the foolish reports which reach you; they increase daily on every subject; the mania for scandal is at the highest pitch, and our enemies do not depreciate our affairs as much as our courtiers and officers. M. de Vendome, who arrived two days ago, is extremely shocked at it; but he will name no one, and yet this is necessary, to make an example.

The French are volatile; they have always murmured when affairs went on well, no wonder therefore at their doing so when they are unfavourable. As to myself, I often receive anonymous letters, in which I am abused for all the evils I bring on the state. They ask me what I can want, on the eve of my death, with the money I am amassing! There is nothing, Madam, but patience for all this.

Poor M. Chamillard is not better treated; but he is really unhappy, both by the greatness of his charge and domestic sorrows. You may

easily imagine that all that has occurred at Turin affects him deeply. M. de la Feuillade will no longer be a visitor here; he proposes to go to Naples. He is rather singular, and resembles his father too much. M. Chamillard has not the heart of a minister; he is tender, full of feeling, and the best natured man in the world: he is now trying to repair our losses, and assures us that the King will have powerful armies on every side. Omit nothing, Madam, on your part, to aid us. I am very impatient to know the effect of the vigorous step the King of Spain has taken to obtain money.

Were you not well pleased with the Marshal de Berwick? I had always a high opinion of him, and I am delighted not to have been deceived. Yes, Madam, the greatest difficulties arise from the want of probity which is found in public men; they are nearly all selfish, envious, faithless, insensible to the public good, and regard any sentiments contrary to their own as romantic and impracticable. We have had the Count de Bergnets here, and in whose praise every body agrees. I am so struck by all they tell me of him, that I feel anxious to see him. Judge from this, of the opinion I entertain of his merits.

Your letters inspire the sentiments you feel; when they were consolatory, I derived comfort from them, and they were certainly read more than once by me. Since they have been sorrowful, they con-

firm me in my dejection ; but they are always affectionate.

I see the letters of your ambassador, and am more and more satisfied with them. I do not recollect whether I replied to what you said to me relative to his interests—it is that the places which he wants cannot be given away till they become vacant ; but the intentions with regard to him are very favourable.

LETTER XXV.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, December 12th, 1706.

THE Duke de Noailles arrived yesterday evening : I only saw him with the royal family, and gave him your letter. The part which you will have in our conversations, Madam, augments my impatience to commence them. It is a long time since I have heard from you : your affairs are those which occupy most attention here. It is hoped that Spain will be supported, and that the pretensions of our enemies will thus be changed : I hope their prosperity will not last always. M. de Vendome is quite full of confidence ; but he has asked leave to go to Anat, before discussing the plan of the approaching

campaign. The Marshal de Villars has returned very well satisfied at not having done any mischief.

Our Princess is in the ninth month of her pregnancy, and in perfect health. God send us a strong and healthy boy ! We cannot avoid wishing as much to the Queen, although it is difficult to know what one ought to wish. The marriage of the Archduke to the Princess of Portugal is talked of. The Count de Grammont is dying ; he had a fit of apoplexy yesterday : his wife has anticipated this loss too long to be overwhelmed by it whenever it shall happen.

LETTER XXVI.

TO THE SAME.

Versailles, December 22d, 1706.

I WILL commence this letter with my very humble excuses for having written one to the Queen in considerable disorder, and at different intervals ; but it was the fever which caused it, and this has now gone off.

Grant Heaven that your prognostics for the next campaign may be realised ! For myself, I assure you my heart is still in despondency, and perhaps I could give you but too good reasons for it, if I had the pleasure of seeing you. I have,

however, still, and always had, great ground of hope in the protection of God for your King and Queen. I thought you would not be sorry to hear that peace was no longer thought of:—there is no appearance of any prince's withdrawing from the league; good fortune preserves their union. The Duke of Savoy is a great prince; he leaves the virtue of tenderness towards children to the citizens. I agree with you that his daughters deserve different sentiments.

You have no longer any thing to fear as to the praises you bestow on the Queen; and if I could be weary of them, it would have been at Marly, where you could never end on that topic, and where I could not find a moment to treat with you on any other.

It is true I am very gloomy, I cannot deny it to you; but I am not discouraged as yet; and I try, as you recommend, not to afflict myself by anticipation. We talk of all sorts of retrenchments here, but these can bear no proportion to the necessary expences of the war.

Nothing is more surprising than the sudden change that has taken place in the King; and it appears there is no exaggeration in what you say on the subject. There must be something miraculous in this. God has perhaps accorded it to the prayers of the Queen: our King was much affected by the news, and anxiously hopes there may be no relapse.

You do me pleasure in noticing the Prince and Princess de Vaudemont. It is true that I have a good opinion of him, and a great esteem for his wife. In the name of God, Madam, do not write to me in your own hand ; take more care of your eyes. You see that notwithstanding the difference between us, with what freedom I use the permission you have given me.

I have read the communication of the ambassador with great attention. Nothing can be stronger or more true than all he states ; but I hope he will be satisfied. It seems to me that matters are at a crisis which cannot last long ; and I think him too sincerely attached to the two Kings to wish to quit them, and see them ruined in other hands. You know better than any one else that his equal is not easily to be found. It is necessary to redouble our courage and virtue in these times, and make private interests give place to public good ; but I hope both the one and the other will be made to agree, for every thing is favourable for him ; and I never saw a person in place whose conduct is so much approved.

You only mock me, Madam, in telling me that you write to me with too much freedom. You confer the greatest honour on me, and I will do my utmost to avail myself of all you write. How true it is that despondency in men weighs down their faculties, and that every thing suffers from it ! I could say a great deal to you on this subject,

but we are doomed to experience every species of suffering in silence, because there are few to whom we dare communicate them.

LETTER XXVII.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, Christmas day, 1706.

YOUR good friend, M. de Pontchartrain, gave me a large packet from you some days ago, and which contained your letter, as well as that which the ambassador wrote to you; both were dated on the 11th instant. I had the honor of replying by the same channel. Since that time I have received another packet dated the 6th. I conceive that one must have come by a courier, and the other by the post. I was enchanted, to be able to shew the King what you say of his grandson; for his Majesty, surprised at this change, asked me, "What does the Princess des Ursins say?" You spoke to me more lightly of it in the letter which accompanied all those that contained the news; but you dilate on the subject in this one in such a manner as to afford great pleasure to the King, who is more attached to the Prince than I could have thought.

For me, who am so apt to draw evil from the greatest good, I begin to fear that we love your King too much, and that his affairs will finish by turning my brain. There is something in all this very unlike the fine spirit which makes you see every thing agreeably, and with that amiable temper which charmed me at Marly, in spite of all the disagreeable matters of which you treated there.

I can easily conceive that the tenderness of the Queen for her husband redoubles, as her esteem increases ; it is impossible that this can be otherwise ; I feel that notwithstanding the predilection I have for you, I would not like you so much as I do if I did not esteem you infinitely : there are no personal attractions which could make me look over a want of probity or candour. I have found all in you, and I am happy to think Providence has separated us. I cannot help being uneasy at this increase of affection in the Queen, for it seemed to me that she had no need of it, and I am charmed to hear she is so well ; she ought to become pregnant. You may depend on it the King wishes to support you, and that he will do every thing in his power.

The Duchess of Burgundy wished to read what you said for her, and has again confirmed me as to her opinion, esteem, and friendship for you. She is very well, and only waits the moment of an accouchement, which seems favourably disposed.

You are really too good to think of writing to

the Countess de Cailus on the death of her mother. She has had the jaundice from it, as well as a thousand other sufferings; I sent for her here: she is very much attached to you. I am quite angry with you, Madam, for writing in your own hand, and a very long letter. Why do you thus endanger eyes and health that are so precious?

You have given me much pleasure in sending me your letters on the affair of the Chevalier d'Espennes. I am glad to know all that concerns you, in order to be able to answer those who speak to me about you. It is very true, as I have already said, that none dare blame you before me. It is impossible that this man could say any thing worse than he has; and I do not perceive that his extravagant reports have made the smallest impression, even on the most censorious.

LETTER XXVIII.

TO THE SAME.

Versailles, January 19th, 1707.

THE Marshal de Boufflers has brought me your letter of the 29th ultimo, this morning; I confess

to you, Madam, that I am by no means suspicious, and that I should with difficulty believe the letters enclosed in the Duchess of Burgundy's packet would be opened. I shall be more careful than ever in putting all I write under an envelope. I answered your letter without remembering by whom I received them; but if you think it right that I should do otherwise, I will take care to state the channel through which they reach me. Is it possible that this man can be jealous and displeased at the good offices you render to our ambassador? How could you refuse him this testimony, and for whom could it be more properly asked? But it will not do to appear as if we saw so unjust a jealousy; as for myself, I shall persevere in praising the services of the ambassador, as long as they deserve to be applauded. It appears that all I say is agreed to, I require no more; but let me again ask you, whether I shall notice the coldness which is shown towards you. I have no intercourse with M. and Madame Beauvilliers. I admit, that I possess some natural goodness, but I have no prudence; I proceed straight forwards, and think only of acting well; I scarcely ever write any thing that I should be sorry for others to read. I have always proceeded with great frankness, and found no disadvantage from it. It seems to me that there is as much skill as there is virtue in uprightness of

conduct. I am sure, however, that I should not be capable of managing affairs where cunning and hypocrisy were required: this is not to my taste. I will burn your letters, if you wish it; I have preserved a great many, to recur to them, if any fault was found with the intercourse I have kept up with you; but if you think it more prudent to discontinue it, you have only to say so.

Mademoiselle de Noailles marries the Marquis de Gondrin, and she is to have the place of a lady in waiting, which the Duchess de Noailles filled. You will say, that this is the act of a good relative; but what would I not do to facilitate a marriage that pleases Madame de Montespan? One of our ladies in waiting, on going to compliment her on the event, found her seated between two pumpkins, some cabbages, and a hundred thousand francs' worth of diamonds which she gives to the bride.

LETTER XXIX.

TO THE SAME.

Versailles, January 23rd, 1707.

THOUGH we generally receive news from Spain on Saturday or Sunday, we have none to-day: I

must not, however, let you be without intelligence concerning the Duchess of Burgundy, for the information of the Queen; this is very favourable, —she began to leave her bed yesterday, and finds herself very well from it. The Duke of Brittany has changed his nurse, because the first had got a cold; he is also very well, but there is every thing to fear for princes, with whom so much pains are taken, that they often kill them; besides the continued agitation their nurses are in, which prevents them from having good milk. I am doubly grieved at not hearing from you to-day, as we hope for a confirmation of our suspicion as to the Queen's situation, and if it continues still, we shall no longer doubt of what we wish.

The Duke de Guiche has the small pox, and Madame de Noailles wherewithal to exercise her activity, between his sickness and the marriage of her daughter, which takes place in two days. The Duchess of Maine furnishes all the amusements of this place; she has plays performed at Clagny, to which every body goes; Monseigneur went there yesterday with a large portion of the court.

The King sees our Princess three times a day: I imagine such attentions fully compensate her for the amusements at which she cannot be present. The Cardinal de Noailles disturbs the Carnival a little by ordering the jubilee to be observed:

it is to commence on Sunday and continue fifteen days. God grant that the prayers made for peace may be heard !

It appears that your affairs occupy great attention here, and that the measures which are taken, give every reason to hope things will go on well on your side. I should be ungrateful, if I doubted the interest you take in my health ; I ought therefore to tell you that I am pretty well, and yours more than ever. I am also very much pleased with what the king thinks of you.

LETTER XXX.

TO THE SAME.

•Saint-Ayr, January 30th, 1707.

HAVE you lost the address which I gave you at Marly ? If so, it will be easy for me to send it to you again. I cannot believe they open our letters ; and if I dare place myself on an equality with you, it seems to me they ought to know us sufficiently, to believe that we only write for the praises or interests of our two Kings, that is, unless you are not the confidant of the correspondence I have with the Princess Anne, or that I am not in yours, in that which you have so long had with the Emperor ; for I well remem-

ber, that you were accused of this formerly. Will not M. de Brancas bring me some letters from you, written with full liberty? I think this channel will be the safest, and I assure you I am grieved for the reasons you have to be distrustful. I have told the Marshal de Villeroi that I was in the opposite extreme, and scarcely ever entertained suspicion. I also informed him that it was a long time since I had heard you spoken of: and that I thought your enemies tired of the reports they circulate: the latest I have heard are those relative to your return to France, the King and Queen of Spain being no longer able to bear you, and our King also unable to give you farther employment.

The contrary was soon seen, for I have heard nothing since. I have charged Madame de Cailus to let me know every thing that regards you. Apropos of Cailus,—she has passed eight days at the house of Madame d'Hudicourt, to console her for the loss of Madame de Montgon. The King asked me why she was at court incognito, since she had never been driven from it, but went away of her own accord: we, therefore, thought it right to advise her to visit the Duchess of Burgundy when she next receives company, and to come to court occasionally, like the ladies of quality who reside at Paris. The goodness with which you honour her, emboldens me to give you

these details. I hope you will have written to Madame d'Hudicourt in her grief: I am delighted when they are satisfied with, and love you; it is for you, Madam, to decide whence this sentiment proceeds.

The Duchess de Noailles is full of joy at having married her sixth daughter to M. de Gondrin; but this joy is greatly disturbed by the state of her husband's health, which gives much uneasiness to his friends. The Duke de Guiche is thought out of danger, the small pox comes out very well, and he is free from fever.

The Duchess of Maine amuses the whole court by her theatrical representations of all kinds; her company is superior to every other: M. de Gondrin is one of the best actors; the Duchess of Orleans and the Duchess of Burgundy are the only persons excluded from the performances, because the Duchess of Maine thinks they would turn her into ridicule: for my own part, I assure you I would do no such thing, and that such pleasures appear to me much more innocent and instructive than ruining one's self at Lansquenet, or in wasting health by eating, drinking, or smoking. I should merely wish, on account of the state of the times, to see the expenses of Clagny a little curtailed.

I think the pregnancy of the Queen will be known at Madrid by letters from France, for we

have made no mystery of it ; and this last confirmation leaves no longer any doubt on the subject.

The reasons of the Queen, in opposing the King of Spain's going to the army, are very strong ; but I doubt whether they will be acceded to in the present conjuncture. I should be greatly embarrassed if I had to decide this question—wiser heads than mine will consider it.

I have given your letter to the Marshal de Villeroi, who is to send me an answer. As I think him more judicious than myself, I dare not tell you that I am by no means satisfied with his conduct towards the King.

You are then charmed at the happy accouchement of our Princess, who is also yours : we are not less pleased, to be able to wish a similar one to the Queen, whom we also regard as our own, for they must never be separated. You will have it that the birth of our Prince is a good omen ; God grant that it may !—You exhort the Marshal de Villeroi to console me, but he sees objects with still more gloom than I do : nevertheless, I am very glad that you are in such good spirits ; this is always agreeable. The King and the Duchess of Burgundy received your congratulations on the birth of the Duke of Brittany very favourably, and are fully convinced of their sincerity : I can assure you, that you stand well with them both.

LETTER XXXI.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, February 6th, 1707.

THERE is no jubilee, Madam, that can prevent us from wishing to hear a little noise in Portugal: it is fortunate that well ordered charity begins at home; without this, what should we do in the present embroiled state of Europe? We wait with impatience the result of this news. It is a sad thing to have two Kings in each kingdom: this is what renders every thing so difficult to terminate; it seems to me, that God alone can unravel such a state of things. I have no vapours, and I am naturally gay, but I confess that our misfortunes have greatly changed my temper; your consolations would be of great use to me, if they came after the declaration I made to you of all my sufferings. I am still convinced you would think as I do, if you knew all that I know; however, Madam, I agree with you, that we must oppose courage to afflictions, and bear with all that it may please God to send us.

M. de Vendome is full of confidence, he will

have a very fine and efficient army. The Marshal de Villars fears nothing in Germany, and I see great cause to hope that every thing will go on well in Spain; our coast is well lined on every side against the descents of the enemy, who could not attack you by water, and assail us at the same time.

The situation in which you will be this summer, gives me a great deal of pain: for I think the Queen's motives for keeping the King at Madrid are very strong, and I see that his going to the army is considered as resolved upon.

I have with my ordinary sorrows, to support others: the Duchess of Burgundy is one of those who suffer most without complaining, except to me, to whom she confides all her uneasiness relative to our own affairs and those of Spain.

I assure you, that your ambassador ought to be satisfied with the manner in which he stands with the King. It is true he does not possess so many external marks of dignity as those who have preceded him; but if the King could at this moment publish what he intends to do for him, he would do it with pleasure, for his Majesty knows the importance and diversity of the services he renders to him; nor do we cease to admire the harmony that reigns between you both, and on which your letters have not thrown the least doubt since your being in Spain.

The Marquis de Brancas speaks highly of the

King and Queen: he is very well satisfied with his general; admires the ambassador, and it seems to me, Madam, that he knows you nearly as well as I have the pleasure of knowing you.

All that you tell me of the Queen appears to augur well for her pregnancy: she can now consult her sister, who has had great experience, and knows how to conduct herself admirably.

The Duchess of Burgundy will thank you, when she is able to write; she charges me to say a thousand friendly things on her part. I entreat that the point concerning M. Amelot may remain between ourselves: I have my reasons for this. I feel pleasure in writing to you, but that of conferring with you would be very different.

LETTER XXXII.

TO THE SAME.

Versailles, February 8th, 1707.

WE receive no letters from you now, without entertaining the greatest fear, lest the Queen should not be pregnant; and I highly approve, as do some who are much more important than myself, of your not having published this event without being more sure of it: but we shall be delighted when we hear from you, that

the Queen has been at Atocha, surrounded with all the Grandees; I can easily conceive the pleasure such a sight will afford the people of Madrid.

I did not know what you tell me of M. de Me-david, nor that M. Rabutin had been beaten by the malcontents: it seems that I am informed of nothing but bad news.

I am extremely anxious to hear from you that the ambassador is tranquil; I desire this for the benefit of the two nations, and I beg you to tell him, that I wish it no less for the esteem I entertain towards him.

This letter goes through M. de Chamillard: I put my last into the Duchess of Burgundy's packet: the packet of Marshal de Villeroi was forgotten; I put it under an envelope, and sent it to M. de Torcy. Your distrusts give me great uneasiness; if they continue, I will take care to avail myself of M. de Chamillard, who has neither the inclination or leisure to open your letters; I also hope to address you by the Marquis de Brancas, which will be a surer channel. Could not the Duke de Noirmoutier give some of your letters to Madame de Cailus? If you wish for a more obscure address I will give you one.

M. de Brancas has told me a number of obliging things on your part; we spoke of you with great pleasure.

LETTER XXXIII.

TO THE SAME.

Versailles, February 13th, 1717.

I HAVE to reply to your letter of the 30th of January, brought by M. Rupelmonde, and to that of the 4th of this month, which has, I think, come by a courier of the Marshal de Berwick.

It is true that I answered the letters which explained the motive of the King of Spain for not placing himself at the head of his army, and that which was found for retaining him at Madrid; I also answered the letter which contained the hopes of the Queen's pregnancy, by several questions about the nurses and the governess; it does not appear by any of your replies, that this letter has ever been received; and I perceive by the despatch of the ambassador, that a packet has miscarried. If our letters were more important, I should propose that they should all be written in cypher, and their receipt punctually acknowledged. Mademoiselle d'Aumale, who has less to do than I have, and more presence of mind, will keep the account with great correctness: I now pass to the letter of M. de Rupelmonde.

I think with you, Madam, as to the fidelity of the governess, and that it is the chief quality to

be considered, particularly in the present situation of things. Is it possible that you cannot find one in Spain? and yet this must be accomplished. The King greatly approves of the Biscayan nurses; but do not think of any thing but the quality and quantity of good milk, without suffering yourself to be taken by surprise with the face, which does not matter: we had a stout and well made nurse whose milk failed; we have now a little and ordinary one, who appears to be very good; and this is not the only instance I have witnessed, for you know I have seen many nurses. The King has also great difficulty in conceiving how it happens that there are no good accoucheurs in Spain, and that there are neither midwives nor able surgeons: he is still afraid that Frenchmen would displease; but there will be time enough to think of this.

The King thinks that it will be very proper for you to address M. de Beauvilliers as governor of the King of Spain, to beg of his wife to do all that is necessary for the Prince or Princess that we expect; the King himself exhorts you to go to very little expense. I apprize you, that if you leave it to Madame de Beauvilliers, she will send you baubles which are quite useless for a child, and very much out of place in our present situation; if you take my advice, you will fix a specific sum. Some laces have been brought for the Duke of Brittany, which cannot be worn, owing

to the extreme delicacy of their texture, and which possess no other merit than that of having cost a great deal of money. Would not beds of crimson damask, with gold borders, and common linen, be sufficient both for the Queen and Prince?

I now come to a more important point, and which it does not depend on me to decide: it is to inquire whether the King is to go to the army, or not: I do not as yet know what answer the King, his grandfather, will give on this subject; we cannot suppose that the courage of the Queen will not enable her to put up with an absence of some months. You have described her thoroughly on this point, and we regard her as being far above all other women: we think she loves the glory of her husband, who would thus be able to continue what he has commenced; but after all, I am of opinion that kings ought to sacrifice even their glory to the good of their subjects, and it seems to me that you will have too much to support, if the King goes away; the subject of finances is essential and unanswerable; it is to you I speak so freely, for I should take care to be silent with every other person, on a matter which exceeds my capacity.

Madame de Cailus has at length re-appeared at court, though not without some confusion both on her part and mine, but she was very well received. I dare not tell you any news of myself,

for you would scold me more than ever, for the extreme melancholy in which I indulge: God grant that you may never be forced to admit I was right, and that you may thus have a plea for overwhelming me with reproaches!

LETTER XXXIV.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, February 27th, 1707.

YOUR arguments have prevailed, and I hear the King of Spain will not proceed to the army: he had made so good a beginning, that it is to be regretted he does not continue; but kings are less their own masters than other men, and it is necessary that the good of the state should yield to every other consideration. I take a great part in the Queen's joy and your own; as you would have been in an awkward situation, and one in which I should have felt alarmed, lest your health, though good, might not have resisted had the Kings set out.

The poor Duchess de Noailles no longer smiles, and I doubt very much whether her husband will extricate himself. He is a very good man and greatly beloved by his numerous family. Our young Captain of the Guards begins very well, and seems to please the King; nevertheless,

I am glad he goes to Roussillon for your service. Will you scold me again, Madam, for being a bad relative?

You are very unjust, to take the part of my nieces against me; it is not my fault, if they do not make so good a figure as I could have wished; and I can truly say, that I departed on their account, from that moderation which I endeavour to observe with regard to myself. I daily perceive the justice of what you say as to the inutility of the examples I wish to give; but I also think that people often repent for not following them.

I did not fail to propose Madame de la Vieuille for a maid of honour: our Princess requires intellect, and to be amused in a large apartment where she passes most of her time: this is not the case now, for she is not a moment in repose; it appears that she expects an early pregnancy, and that she wishes to heap pleasure on pleasure: her health is good, she is strong, and her complexion bears the rouge put on it by others; if she had good teeth there could not be a more pleasing face.

The Cardinal de la Tremouille did me the honour of writing to me at the commencement of the year; and I have more than one reason for excepting him from the resolution of making no new acquaintances.

LETTER XXXV.

TO THE SAME.

Marly, March 5th, 1707.

M. DE LANGLEE will give you an account of what he has already done towards executing your orders ; he is terrified at the expence, owing to the great size of the Queen's room : he is going to propose that you should make use of the pictures to save tapestry. You may calculate that what you require, with the bed linen, which is to be prepared by Madame de Beauvilliers, will cost more than fifty thousand crowns : this is nothing for the Queen and the Prince of Asturias, but it is a great deal for the present state of affairs.

Nothing can be finer than the description you give of the ceremony which has taken place at Madrid ; I thought I saw it, and I can easily conceive that nothing was more agreeable in the pageant than the young and brilliant Queen, who performed the principal part, as she must have been its greatest ornament. The *Camerara Mayor* did not spoil the scene ; and I think she was at least for that moment sufficiently gratified, the fatigue not being so great as to diminish the pleasure of the other attractions.

I suffered M. de Brancas to depart without

writing to you by him, but I was just then attacked by the fever; I do not regret it much, not being able to prevail on myself to write what I did not wish to be seen.—This is a maxim which I have always adopted, and which I have endeavoured to impart to those who interest me the most. Grant that they may profit by it!

I am delighted to hear the ambassador is satisfied; he ought to be so at the arrangements of the King in his favour, and his success in this quarter ought to console him for what he may apprehend from others, of which I have no knowledge. I am persuaded, Madam, that this little notice, going through you, will be more agreeable to him, than the reply I should have made to the letter he has done me the honour of addressing to me.

LETTER XXXVI.

TO THE SAME.

Marly, March 6th, 1707.

You are very good to Madame de Cailus and very unjust towards me; what would I not do for her? Is it my fault that she has acted in this way? I know there are several here who have committed still greater errors, but they were not attended with such unfortunate circumstances: it

was these circumstances which prevented me from proposing her as a maid of honour, as liking my Queen better than my relative. And notwithstanding what you say, I am sure you would have done the same: if I thought only of myself, I should have wished to bring her nearer to me; but you know, that when we please princes sufficiently to induce them to wish for our services, we ought thenceforth to think of them alone.

Yes, remain near the Queen, although she cannot bear you, and do not deceive yourself as to your palace at Rome: it would, in truth, be a great pity were you in repose, for action suits you best, and there are numbers of worthy people who profit by it.

I have read the eloquent effusion contained in your letter on the joy you feel at having seen the King, and been able to judge him so closely; you have both gained by this; and he desires me to tell you that he would have been very sorry not to have seen your merits with his own eyes. As to myself, I bless God every day for the disgrace which brought you here. It often happens that we consider that as a misfortune, which is regarded as a benefit in the end: pardon this trifling digression.

I am very well satisfied with Marshal de Villeroi, as far as regards myself, but I think he might have observed a better line of conduct with respect to himself.

LETTER XXXVII.

TO THE SAME.

Versailles, March 25th, 1770.

You will, like us, have experienced all the uncertainty which has taken place relative to the affairs of Scotland: I do not know whether you approve the project, but there never was one that interested the public so much as this: our Princes, the courtiers, the city, and people, in fact the whole country, were thrown into consternation, when it was apprehended the expedition could not depart; and nothing could exceed their joy when they heard that the King of England had actually set sail.

The enemy has already embarked some Flemish troops, and if this diversion continues, it will be favourable to us; but God alone knows what may be the result. The Duke de Noailles delays his departure for some days, in order to hasten the supplies which are absolutely necessary for him—Money comes in by degrees, but not in such quantities as are required.

I admire your Spaniards, at being so glad to see M. Desmaretz in office; and it is admirable in the public to pass from the horror in which they held the two ministers of whom you speak, to the praises which are every where heard since they

are no more. You have great reason to say that men are strange animals ; indeed there are none so malignant, without even excepting the ferocious portion of the brute creation. We daily witness examples of this truth, which are sufficient to make one sigh for the desert.

LETTER XXXVIII.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, April 10th, 1707.

THE affairs of Italy afflict you ; I very much fear that you will in the end pardon all my sorrows ; perhaps I foresee them at a great distance, but they are too well founded. I greatly fear the return of summer. The Duke of Savoy will do us all the harm he can, and the Marshal de Tessé has set out so discouraged, that I cannot place much confidence in him. The Duke de Vendome is not like the Marshal ; he is preparing to do wonders, and every body agrees that he has a very large and well disposed army. May God conduct it !

The reduction of general officers has afflicted many persons ; but it is one of the misfortunes of kings to give dissatisfaction.

The seditious movements in certain provinces

will deprive you of some troops ; does it not create a just source of affliction, to see no end to so cruel a war, and to hear of nothing but human sufferings ? Can there be any thing more afflicting than that of the Spanish noblemen of whom you write, and who are ruined through the fidelity they have shewn to their real King ? All your courage is required to support what you are doomed to witness, as well as what you have to fear.

Our King is tranquil, firm, equal in his temper, and precisely as you left him : his health is very good, and his occupations are the same, nor does it appear as if any thing had happened to give him pain : there is something surprising in this, and which always astonishes me. Our Princess makes every effort to amuse herself, and only succeeds in becoming weary and giddy. She went to dine at Meudon yesterday, attended by twenty-four ladies : the whole party were to go to the fair afterwards, to see some famous dancers on the tight rope, and return to supper at Meudon, and no doubt to play until day-light. She will, perhaps, arrive this morning quite ill, or at least very dull, for such is the invariable result of these pleasures.

LETTER XXXIX.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, April 16th, 1707.

You appear to have seen the Duke of Orleans, and I have no doubt but that you were quite satisfied with each other. Heaven grant that he may not bring any misfortunes on you! In other respects he possesses all that could be wished to be useful.

I am delighted to hear that eighty Spaniards have beaten five hundred Englishmen. I am naturally fond of the Spaniards, without mentioning what they are to us now, and I hate the English as much as the people. I never thought I should be capable of so much littleness; but really I cannot bear them, and I show you all my weaknesses as the occasion presents itself.

It would seem that you comprehend the cause of all my sadness; but you are truly right in saying, that we should receive every thing from the hand of God; he knows what we require better than ourselves; and if we were wise, we should only think of him, for it is he alone that can confer happiness.

LETTER XL.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, April 24th, 1707.

I WILL acquaint Marechal of the opinion which you have of the surgeon he has procured you, and you shall have Clement in spite of the clamours of all the women. They have done their utmost to make the Duchess of Burgundy their friend, by telling her that she might become pregnant at the same time as the Queen of Spain, and that it would be necessary, in such a case, that one of them should change their accoucheur. Our Princess, however, will not see so far into futurity, and is only desirous of giving to the Queen, her sister, what she thinks is best; for certainly Clement is not only one of the most skilful, and who has the greatest practice in his profession, but prudent, patient, and modest; he will, therefore, bear the questions of the King, and the cries of the Queen, without being incommoded. The Duchess of Burgundy sends her nurse also, and takes great pleasure in the idea of what she will report of the Queen on her return. She is a woman the reverse of people in general of her profession, being polite, respectful, and very skilful. It will be advisable, while you have her

with you, that she teaches one of the Spanish women how to manage an infant.

If I were not so much occupied, I would have made some experiments upon the English mode of rearing children ; for they are almost all tall and well made, as we have seen them at St. Germain, —the King being only six months old when he came, and the Princess was born there.

Their bodies are freed from restraint at the end of two or three months, and under their frocks they have a double cloth simply tied without any bandage, which gives an opportunity of changing their dress as soon as there is the least occasion. They put them on stockings and shoes when they begin to wear frocks ; however, there is no probability that a new experiment will be made upon a Prince of Asturias. You wish to make us apprehensive of an indifferent confinement, in order to procure the early attendance of all our servants ; for which, indeed, you are to be pardoned, provided you make them labour hard to form others like them. The King is positively determined not to send you the nurse of the Queen, being persuaded that you would soon send her back.

Although the Archduke's marriage makes no alteration in the state of affairs, I shall be very sorry to hear of two Queens of Spain.

M. de Vendome has set out full of confidence, and he is convinced that his army is more numerous than that of Marlborough.

Marshal Villars took his leave of me yesterday, very well satisfied with his army, and anxiously hoping to signalize himself if an opportunity offers. I heard in the evening that he would not depart as soon as he expected, the King not thinking it necessary.

Have you not, in the favorite convent of the Queen, some saint, whose prayers you might obtain to procure us a good peace?

Many people thought that the Duke of Savoy might molest our troops in Lombardy; but it is said, that he surpasses even Prince Eugene in affording facilities for their march. Is this the effect of his devotion? It is, however, highly probable that both would like to be rid of us.

I should be very glad to hear of the Duke of Orleans' arrival at Madrid, and his departure for the army, for I always fear the French at your Court; the household of the Duke is nearly like that of the late Monsieur, and consequently of an indifferent composition. The Duke de Noailles is desirous of doing something, and requires a few more troops; but so many are wanted everywhere, that it is extremely difficult to furnish them.

LETTER XLII.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, May 1st, 1707.

It is eight days since I received your letter of the 10th ultimo, just after my packet, or, to speak more correctly, that of the Duchess of Burgundy was despatched.

However timid I may be, I could have wished for a battle in the present conjuncture; but we hear that the enemy has retired, and expects a reinforcement.

You are right in wishing for many nurses; but you will have some trouble to keep them, if you do not allow them a little liberty.

I am not surprised that you are pleased with the Duke of Orleans, as he possesses great and estimable qualities; and I am not less so with what he writes about the King, the Queen, yourself, and all he has seen at Madrid. I am not sorry, however, at his speedy departure, for I should have some fears from his attendants. Grant that he may be more prosperous in Spain than he was in Italy!

It is a long time since you have mentioned the ambassador, who continues to stand perfectly well where he wishes to be so. I hear no more said of you by your enemies, and I think they begin to

despair of a second disgrace. I am pleased with myself for having always attended to the affairs of Spain; M. de Torcy shows me all the letters, and it appears to me that you have no longer any cause of uneasiness.

Cardinal D'Estrées has communicated to me this morning the marriage of the Duke D'Estrées with Mademoiselle de Nevers, who is promised a fortune of four hundred thousand francs. It is the lady of Marshal Noailles who has renewed this connection, which was formerly broken off. I am surrounded by female relations; Mademoiselle de Cailus comes very often to Versailles and sees me frequently: she has accompanied the King to Trianon. The Duchess de Noailles is a great deal with me; they were both in my room yesterday, with Madame de Villette, who is a very pretty woman. I do not know whether she has the honor of being known to you; I boast of this change of system to you, in order to escape your future reproaches.

LETTER XLIII.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, May 8th, 1707.

It is very just to thank the God of battles for that which he has enabled us to gain, and

' you have so well conceived the joy of the King and that of all the royal family, that I cannot refrain from communicating to you the particulars. You know Marly, and my apartment; the King was alone in my little room, and I was sitting down to table in my closet, through which it was necessary to pass; an officer of the guards cried out at the door, "Here is M. de Chamillard." The King answered, "What! he himself?" because he was not expected to come; I threw down my napkin, with emotion, on which M. de Chamillard said, "That's right!" and entered immediately, followed by M. de Silly, whom I did not know: you may well imagine that I also entered. I then heard of the defeat of the enemy's army, and returned to sup in very good humour. The Dauphin, who was playing, or looking on in the saloon, soon joined the King, and the Duke of Burgundy entered with a billiard mace in his hand; Madame, to whom a message had been dispatched with the news that the Duke of Orleans had gained a battle, arrived soon after. I told her that he was not there, at which she was very angry, and I understood that she said, "I shall soon hear that my son has hanged himself." Madame de Dangeau left the table to go and write to her husband, who was at Paris. I re-peruse with pleasure those parts of your letter of the 17th April, in which you tell me of the advantages that would follow the winning of a battle

in Spain. God grant that you may prove a true prophetess!

LETTER XLIV.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, May 15th, 1707.

It seems to me that I have never been so long without hearing from you, and I have now only to answer a letter of the 25th ult. Marshal Noailles is in perfect health and very grateful for all your good wishes towards him. I am delighted with what you say about the Duke de Noailles; I have not heard him mentioned since your victory: he will be sensibly affected at it, and if it were possible for him to embarrass the Archduke, he would do it most joyfully. Many flatter themselves with the idea that this prince's presence will be required in Italy; as for myself, who am not so sanguine, I shudder at the idea of some ill success in Flanders.

Marlborough is in Holland; his troops and ours are assembling, and the campaign will open on the 20th of this month.

It is said that Marlborough has had private audiences of the King of Sweden, but it is not yet known what has been the result; perhaps it will not be kept so secret in Holland

when he shall have given an account of his mission. The case of the Duchess of Burgundy is still uncertain, but we shall know what to depend upon in some months. She has never heard any thing so gallant as what you tell her of the apple of discord which would have been amongst our enemies if she had been carried off. I think she has written to you about the battle which you have gained, and I can assure you that she feels great esteem and friendship for you.

I can easily conceive the joy of the ambassador, for there is scarcely a man in the world who stands higher in my estimation; it is some time since I have seen any of his letters to M. de Torcy. Grant that the good understanding which subsists between you may continue! as we clearly see the favourable change it has caused in the situation of our two Kings.

If you knew all the follies which are imputed to the Countess de Grammont, with respect to her pretensions, when I am gone, you would see that I cannot easily believe every thing I hear concerning her.

It is said that Prince Eugene and the Duke of Savoy are sending 10,000 men to Naples; but all this is as yet very uncertain. It is not true that Marshal de Tessé is recalled, but M. de Médavid is going to command in Savoy. We have the Prince de Vaudemont at Marly; I do not recollect to have seen him when he was here before; he

seems very amiable, though still extremely feeble ; he is quite a favourite at Court, and envied by all. The King shows him every kind of civility, and he vows that he will not quit Marly unless he is driven from it. His wife has gone into Lorraine with the Duchess of Mantua, who is about to enter a convent there. M. and Madame de Vaudemont say that she was not in safety in Italy, and highly extol the propriety of her conduct there.

The King finds himself so comfortable at Marly that he has prolonged his stay eight days. We shall go from thence to Trianon, without stopping at Versailles.

The Prince de Conti, Marshal Villeroi, and M. Matignon, are about to contend for Neufchatel. I fear they have a strong opposition in M. de Brandenbourg. The King does not interfere, but it is natural for him to wish for the election of a Frenchman.

Clement and Madame de la Salle are to set out to-morrow. I hope they will conduct themselves with propriety.

My God, Madam, how I could wish, in addition to my long life, to be six months older, in order that there might be an end to my anxiety respecting this campaign ! I sometimes figure to myself a general battle in Flanders, the Archduke gone out of Spain, peace made with Portugal, a Prince of Asturias at Madrid, and with all this, the continuance of your kindness towards me.

LETTER XLV.

TO THE SAME.

Marly, May 21st, 1707.

WE have heard the happy consequences of the battle gained in Spain, and we doubt not but Valencia and Aragon will soon submit. I can easily conceive that you will be tolerably quiet for some time; but, according to all appearances, the Archduke will wait at Barcelona for a powerful reinforcement, of which it is impossible he should be disappointed, unless our enemies prefer entering France.

Marlborough has arrived; the armies are to be assembled in three days, and yet you wish me to be tranquil! I hear every day the courtiers say that if a battle is lost in Flanders, all will be lost; and if one is gained, we shall be but little the better for it. Do you not think that the Duke and Prince Eugene are formidable in Savoy? Indeed I have but too many reasons to be anxious, and I am so in good earnest. We have lost Marshal d'Estrées. Madame de Nemours still holds out, and says that she will keep the postillions booted longer than we expect. She has seen all the pretenders to Neufchatel, because her confessor required it.

All our Princes to whom Madame de Nevers is related, press the King for a large pension, pretending that this beautiful widow is in a state of beggary. Others affirm that nothing has been found in the palace Mazarine, and that she has despoiled it of sixteen hundred thousand francs. Madame Sforza solicits like a good sister, and applies in every quarter for the dukedom in favour of her nephew, but I do not think she will succeed. M. de Vaudemont still continues to be a great favourite. He goes to Commercy after leaving Marly, to meet his wife, whom he will afterwards bring to court. Madame d'Elbeuf accompanies him to pay a visit to the Duchess of Mantua.

I have nothing to say upon the subject of the Duchess of Burgundy. I do not think I shall have any repose whilst the campaign lasts: you must pardon me, for I have it not in my power.

LETTER XLVI.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, May 29th, 1707.

I MUST begin by rejoicing with you on the late proceedings of Marshal de Villars, as you will know how to appreciate them better than myself.

There he is on the other side of the Rhine, subsisting upon our enemies, and levying contributions in our turn. We must, however, pardon him for being somewhat disposed to take care of himself; since he is enterprising and fortunate. I shall not enter into the particulars, as I have no doubt of their being communicated to M. Amelot more correctly than I can do it. I shall now answer your letter of the 7th instant, which I found on my return to Marly eight days ago, as I had foreseen; but in order to answer you sooner in future, I have desired the Duchess of Burgundy to send them to me here, where I am every Sunday, and where I write more at my ease than I could at Marly.

You will soon have Clement and the nurse; and I hope that you will be as well satisfied with their conduct as with their ability. If any thing could console our Princess in her pregnancy, which is still uncertain, it will be to pass the night in talking of the Queen to Madame La Salle.

I see and enjoy your present felicity, and I doubt not but the Archduke will be soon confined to Barcelona and a part of Catalonia; but do you not apprehend a powerful reinforcement for him, before your troops have re-entered Portugal?

M. de Vendome, and M. de Marlborough, are almost in sight of each other, and you wish me to be tranquil! Have you forgot the battle of Ramil-

lies? Our army is admirable, and stronger than that of the enemy. May God lead us to a happy peace! I promise you after that to be very cheerful, and heartily enjoy the pleasure of being surrounded by my relations.

The Duke of Savoy has not molested our troops, and they have safely reached their destination. I dare not tell you that I fear dreadfully from that quarter; the Italian princes are very much irritated at our having abandoned them, and did us all the injury they could while we were among them. The fidelity of Naples and Sicily is admirable; but what could they do if the enemy sent an army against them?

I communicated to the King all your congratulations; he replies to them as he did to you at Marly; you were then satisfied, and with reason. He was in habits of great friendship with you, and you are as high as ever in his estimation since your return to Spain.

I do not wonder at the regret of the Duke of Orleans in not having been at the battle of Almanza; it will be some time before he gets over this disappointment.

I am delighted that the Prince of Asturias is strong; I should not like a princess to be so robust. You will do very well to accustom yourself to the best mode of treating future pregnancies, and to be no longer in want of a person to choose nurses.

Clement will teach you the proper taste and consistence which milk ought to possess. You will also be able to obtain some valuable information from Madame La Salle : and I am well convinced that there is nothing you would not do for their Catholic Majesties ; I have seen more of this than you can tell me.

How sorry should I be to interrupt the Ambassador's progress. I judge him by his conduct, by what you tell me, and by his letters. He is much above my praise, but he shall have it as long as he continues to act as he now does. I do not yet know if the marriage of the Duke d'Estrées will take place. You will have heard of the death of Marshal d'Estrées, and that the King has given all his appointments to Marshal de Cœvre. Madame de Montespan died at Bourbon the 27th of this month : she had only three days' illness, and received all her sacraments. A courier was sent for M. d'Antin, but I do not know whether he could have found her in her senses.

The King asked me some time ago if his catholic majesty continued to speak as he had begun, as he had heard nothing more said about it : I replied that you were also silent upon the subject, and that I considered the affair settled and likely to continue.

M. de Vaudemont is as much in vogue as on

the day of his arrival; he hunts with the King, plays with our Princess, and walks better than he has done for many years; I have only seen him once, and, like others, I am quite delighted with him.

I have just reperused your letters, to see if I have answered all your inquiries. Heavens, Madam! how happy you are! there is never any thing melancholy in what you write; with me the perusal of your letter is succeeded by a flow of spirits which I scarcely know how to appreciate; in order to fill up my measure of happiness, we must have peace, and on conditions that will be satisfactory to me; you shall see after that in what kind of humour I shall be!

LETTER XLVII.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, June 3rd, 1707.

I COULD wish that the account I have given you of our rejoicing for the battle of Almanza were as lively as the idea you formed of what passed in my closet; you have comprehended it better from Madrid than I saw it, and you give a description of it which I could not refrain from reading to persons who were on the spot.

You will feel additional satisfaction in learning that the lines of Stolhoffen have been forced, and that the Marshal de Villars is about to give a little occupation to the Princes of Germany.

M. de Marlborough has not been so furious this year; he has been making some retrograde movements, which have made people imagine that he wishes to detach troops into Germany; but we were informed here yesterday that he was marching forwards,—thus we are constantly expecting a battle. It is said the Dutch do not wish to risk one, though they have received some reinforcements; our army seems to wish for it.

I dare not say any more of my apprehensions; my heart is oppressed, especially on the side of Savoy: it is said that the Duke of Savoy vehemently opposes the sending off a detachment, which the Imperialists wish to do, to Naples, in order that he may be in a better condition to enter France; we have not a more bitter enemy than he is. I have this morning seen an officer of my acquaintance who comes from Turin, where he has been a prisoner since the raising of the siege. He tells me that the Duke has charged him to tell the Duchess of Burgundy that the war had not lessened his affection for her.

I admire your courage; you think of refusing peace to the Portuguese if they ask for it, and you

wish to destroy that kingdom; I should be very well satisfied that the good King of Portugal could enjoy in repose the usurpation of his ancestors and the pleasure which his chaplains afford him, provided the Archduke was out of Catalonia. My castles in the air put him sometimes into the hands of the Duke de Noailles, who would conduct him here very respectfully, and where I think he would amuse himself better than at Barcelona.

The attentions to M. de Vaudemont have continued during the whole of his stay at Marly, and he has been courtier enough to walk without a stick, thanks to the air of Marly, which he has not done for many years. We shall soon see his wife, who has been out of France forty years; conceive, Madam, how we shall find her changed, and how she will find others!

LETTER XLVIII.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, June 12th, 1707.

It is true that the affairs of Spain are much changed. May God be pleased to complete what he has begun! I am alarmed about the siege of Lerida, and fear the same scene that took place at Catinat: I am also impatient lest the

cold weather should not have commenced in Portugal, and that you would compel them to sue for peace : if they do, grant it, and postpone this conquest to another time.

M. de Vendome and Marlborough are still three leagues from each other ; our general longs to do something, but he ought to do so with a probability of success. M. de Villars pursues the enemy, and levies large contributions ; he has written them a letter, which is called romantic : people say that he is mad, but I must confess I wish the King had many more such madmen. Our army of Germany will no longer cost us any thing ; this is a great consolation. The Marshal de Tessé is more circumspect ; he sees all his danger, and makes me tremble for the result ; he is in a very perilous position.

I think I have told you our Princess is not pregnant, but that she is in good health ; she came here yesterday to prayers, and spent the day with us. Madame de Cailus has been some days at Versailles, and is to return there very soon. I have the Duchess de Noailles with me to-day. You lecture me about strangers and my relations ; I confess to you that the females of the present day are to me insupportable : their ridiculous and immodest dress, their snuff, wine, gluttony, coarseness, and indolence, are all so opposite to my taste, that it is natural for me to dislike them. I prefer modest, sober, and sprightly women, who can be

both serious and playful, polite, of a raillery which conveys praise, whose hearts are good and conversation lively, and artless enough to confess to me that they recognise themselves in this portrait, which, though drawn unintentionally, I think extremely correct.

LETTER XLIX.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, June 19th, 1707.

M. DE VENDOME pretends that the enemy will be compelled to decamp sooner than himself. The Marshal de Villars proceeds so fast that nothing can prevent him from levying heavy contributions ; but what use is there in tormenting the empire if our enemies enter France ?

Madame de Nemours has at last terminated her career, and all the competitors for Neufchatel are in the field. I have only seen M. de Vaudemont once, but am not ignorant that the King is favourable to him. He is going to Commercy, though I do not think he will remain there long : he likes the court too well to continue in the country, and finds nothing so delicious as living at Marly. I heard yesterday that they are still detaching troops from the small number

which the Duke de Noailles commands; he will be distressed, but where the danger is greatest, it must be provided against.

We can scarcely depend upon the news which obliged you to send your last courier: report says the enemy only talk of peace in the army of Flanders; it would be singular if it took place without our knowledge.

M. d'Antin has given you an account of Madame de Montespan's death: he attended her during the three last days of her illness; she was as tranquil as she had been the reverse during her lifetime upon the subject of death, which no person dare introduce in her presence when well. She did not say a word about any body, nor to her son, though he was present. She merely said to the priest, "Father, exhort me as an ignorant mortal, and as briefly as you can."

We are in a charming spot here; I do not know whether you have seen Trianon at this season of the year; but I must confess to you, that I should feel more at ease in a cave, with a peace made on fair terms, than I am in an enchanted and perfumed palace, like this. The Duchess of Burgundy does all she can to destroy her health; but she will not believe it until it is too late.

LETTER L.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, June 26th, 1707.

I AM quite astonished to hear the lines of Stolhoffen still spoken of; it is high time to forget them now. The Marshal de Villars is constantly advancing; he has taken a castle of some importance, and continues to levy heavy contributions; but the terror is so great, that all the inhabitants abandon the country: so that I know not who is to pay them. In the mean time, we do not hear that the German princes cry out as much as might be expected, nor that the enemy have as yet sent detachments for their succour. It is said that the Dutch expect success in the enterprise against Dauphiny and Provence; and it is from this quarter that all my uneasiness arises, as much by its importance, as by the little confidence I have in the general who commands there.

The death of Madame de Montespan has not disabled me from writing to you; but it is, nevertheless, true that I feel it very sensibly, and that I was always interested about her. As her rank was not acknowledged by the courts of Europe, her daughters have not received formal letters of condolence; and I think I have signified as much

as this to you before : I will however inform them of your wishes, and I think the matter must rest there. The two daughters have manifested a grief which has excited the praise of all their friends, and it even began to appear excessive ; but we are not fond of long afflictions at court.

The Countess de Gramont has been for some time at Leuville : I should be sorry to inform you of all her imputed follies, which may however be summed up, by her impatience for my death, in order that she may occupy my place. She must have felt some consolation on hearing of a very violent fever which I have had during the last four days, but which has only left me rather weak. I am very angry with Madame de Beauvilliers, for not having shown the baby linen to the Duchess of Burgundy ; but as it is now too late, I have said nothing about it.

The Duke de Noailles is too happy at the good opinion of their Catholic Majesties, and the part which you take in every thing that concerns him. He means well, and is very assiduous ; but he can only execute what is entrusted to him.

There is nothing doing in Flanders : we scarcely know what to wish for in that quarter ; but it appears to me that our affairs are not in such a bad state, provided the Duke of Savoy does not succeed in his present object : we hear from all quarters that he is extremely ill, though the Duche

Royal writes to say that he is quite well. Besides the other reasons which I have to fear his designs, I should cruelly suffer from the natural grief of our dear Princess, to see all our misfortunes occasioned by her father.

LETTER LI.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, July 10th, 1707.

MARSHAL DE VILLARS is a little too far advanced in Germany: the enemy has cut off his communications by an extraordinary march. He, however, soon approached them, and assures the King that he will maintain his superiority during the whole campaign, unless they receive a powerful reinforcement: he is at present at Dourlach. I have received a letter from the Princess of Baden, requesting me to cause some diminution in the contributions which Marshal Villars has levied. Only think of my joy, provided I can commence a correspondence with this Princess,—you who are aware of the eagerness I feel for meddling in public affairs.

I know that the Duke of Orleans wanted the necessary stores for the siege of Lerida, and that, from being compelled to postpone it,

something may happen which will prevent it from taking place; but you will attribute all these thoughts to my usual misgivings.

I dread an action in Flanders, because the battle may be lost; and if it is gained, there will be, as every body says, very little advantage on our side. It is reported that Marlborough is daily pressing the States to permit him to attack M. de Vendome; but that they positively refuse. I must own, that the Duke of Savoy has disturbed my sleep, by the apprehension that he would retaliate upon our troops. I have the unhappiness to suffer for every thing where there is any reason to fear, as well as for the reverse.

I am told that the enterprise against Naples is abandoned, and that the enemy are about to send the troops intended for it into Spain.

M. de Vaudemont is to be at Marly to-day: he cannot exist any where else: he is upon the best terms with the Duchess of Burgundy, who is delighted with his polite manners. The Princess de Vaudemont is at Paris, but I think she will come to Marly very soon; we shall remain there during the whole of July. I dare say I shall see her oftener than her husband; I am not dissatisfied to have been able to dispense with his society; however, it has not occupied my thoughts: he has not intimated a wish to see me; but you know that I am not anxious for visitors.

Madame d'Hudicourt, with whose sprightly disposition you are acquainted, told us some days ago, that she was growing insipid since she had taken it into her head to be a little more rational. I should please her much by telling her what you say to me about her. I shall endeavour to build castles in the air agreeably to your suggestion; they have not hitherto had the same effect upon me as my fears.

Marshal de Tessé still finds himself very weak: Prince Eugene is marching towards Provence. The Duke of Savoy is in good health, and will soon stir himself on his side; the fleet is also to appear before Toulon. Do you think all this is calculated to give me joy? I must then, to obey you, persuade myself that they will not succeed; that the winds will drive off the fleet, and that the troops will consequently die of hunger, for they will not be able to find any subsistence in the country: that they will return in disgrace, and we shall make peace this winter upon honourable terms, and which will insure the crown to the King and Queen of Spain. This idea would please me much if I could only encourage it.

It is true that Monseigneur often visits the Duchess. I know nothing of the devotional spirit of the Princess de Conti, except that she employs twelve female orphan children in her garden at Versailles, superintended by two sisters of charity.

If my relations resembled the portraits you draw of them, I should love them too much ; but they take care of this : I forget the sketch I sent you ; but I think it was tolerably correct.

I find the two questions which the ambassador is about to propose very important, especially the last ; and I think the change of succession which you suggest absolutely necessary : we shall see what the King decides.

LETTER LII.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, July 17th, 1707.

THERE is nothing new at court, except the arrival of the Princess de Vaudemont at Marly ; she wished to see me here first, and that I should have the honour of attending her during the first visit she paid the King in my apartments ; the Duchess of Burgundy came towards the close of the interview. The Princess having been absent from France forty years, scarcely knew any one at court, and found great difficulty in calling to mind those of her own time ; it was the same with them ; this scene had nothing in it flattering to self-love ; for my own part, I am charmed with this couple, and the manner

in which they bear their change of fortune: she intends to divide her time between the solitude of Commercy, the Convent of Pont-à-Mousson, where Madame de Mantua is, and occasionally at court. The Princess is very devout, which must be a great source of consolation to her.

As you think our affairs go on prosperously every where, I dare not speak to you of my fears for Toulon, nor of the uneasiness I feel lest you cannot do that in Spain, which would have had a tendency to bring operations to an end, or at least to have crippled the Archduke.

LETTER LIII.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, July 23rd, 1707.

WELL, Madam, the Duke of Savoy and Prince Eugene are at length in France, burning every thing, and marching on Toulon; you will easily conceive that I already see this city in flames, all the King's ships burnt, and the enemy established in Provence. Many people here seem, however, to think they are not getting on so fast, that the Marshal de Tessé may reach it before them, and that their enterprise is extremely difficult of execution. God grant that it may be I alone who am deceived!

The Marshal d'Harcourt is acting the courtier at Marly, and says he can do nothing else. Marshal Villars, on the other hand, is doing wonders; he is master of Manheim, and levying heavy contributions: but there is an end to policy. The German Princes are frightened, but not one withdraws from the league. M. de Marlborough says that they may cry in vain, as he will not send them a man; that he attaches but little importance to what has occurred in Spain and Germany, provided the attempt on Provence succeeds.

It is true that the competitors for the sovereignty of Neufchatel are very active; but I could wish to think of other matters as lightly as I do of this.

I think the King will recommend that the birth of the Prince of Asturias should be announced to the Duke of Savoy: at least he does so upon similar occasions, and has no idea of petty vengeance; I am sure you will be of the same opinion, and that you will write to Madame Royale, as if we were at peace with them. I am persuaded that the poor Princesses suffer much.

No, Madam, I shall not die in a cave; though I could pass my time in one with you without becoming weary; nor am I vapourish, or so much in want of fresh air and agreeable objects. I am vexed with things that are worth being vexed for, and at which I cannot help being affected, and however you may smile, I think you also pass some unpleasant moments.

You have never answered the question I put to you respecting his Catholic Majesty, which was, whether he continued to speak out and decide for himself, to show himself in public, to transact business, in a word, to act his part? I admire his kindness in writing to the lady of Marshal de la Motte, and thus giving her new life; she has had the jaundice in consequence of being told that the Duke de Berri had had an apoplectic fit, and was bled three times.

July 24th.

M. de Villars has not been able to advance any further; but he is satisfied with his position, and seems to think he can maintain his superiority. It is certain that M. de Vendome is not afraid; he is extremely confident, and laughs at the idea of the Duke of Savoy having designs upon Provence. The Duke is there, however, with forty thousand men; and if he arrives at Toulon before Marshal de Tessé, there is little to hope for that place. It is a pity we have but one Vendome!

Our Princess is still sorrowful to think her father should injure us so much: this is also an additional affliction for me.

LETTER LIV.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, July 31st, 1707.

YESTERDAY news was brought that twenty-nine battalions had entered Toulon, that they wanted for nothing, that the best disposition prevailed, and that the resistance would be most vigorous ; I shall abstain from adding my own reflections to the above. But you see the kingdom of Naples is lost, and consequently that of Sicily ; it is impossible to be strong everywhere, and quite wonderful to have resisted so long. Bad news grieves me at all times ; but I should be contented to feel it still more acutely, provided the Queen only receives good news in her present state.

It is said that there are some very good officers at Toulon : Marshal de Tessé has paid a visit there, and has left it to return to his army, which is not now very strong.

M. de Vendome laughs again at our fears for Provence ; this over confidence is often dangerous.

LETTER LV.

Saint Cyr, August 7th, 1707.

You find fault with me because the Duke of Orleans does not obtain what he wants ; we regret it as much as you ; it is a great misfortune to have so many things upon the mind, and for so long a time.

What will you say, then, when troops are required for Provence ? We must attend to the most pressing quarter. We have not had the war in our own country before ; and if the Duke of Savoy succeeded in his project, we should have it very near us : it is to be hoped that God will not abandon the Kings and our religion, which would suffer as much as them, if the Huguenots rose up in rebellion, as this Prince hopes. He has had Cavalier at his table, and he will neglect nothing to gain partisans in order to accomplish his object.

The news received yesterday from Toulon, dated the 2nd instant, states that the entrenchments are completed, and in good order ; that there is abundance of cannon ; that the wind has driven off the ships of the enemy which were bringing artillery and ammunition ; that they are only allowed four ounces of bread, in want of water, and beginning to desert : if all this be true,

and continues any length of time, the Duke of Savoy will have cause to repent.

I have learned with grief that the siege of Denia is raised : this is very different from transporting the artillery which is there, to carry on the siege of Lerida. It is reported here that Marshal de Berwick has quarrelled with the Duke of Orleans, and that M. de Nancré is the cause of it; the King is the only person who has not heard this news, for which I am truly sorry. Our enemies strengthen themselves in Germany, and we rather weaken Marshal Villars; thus he will not be able to advance further to levy contributions. The Emperor and the Duke of Savoy are in too good health, notwithstanding all the evils they are said to suffer; it is lamentable to be obliged to wish them otherwise. I hope we shall hear of the birth of the Prince of Asturias before our departure for Fontainebleau, which is to be on the 12th of September.

If the enterprise of the Duke of Savoy succeeds, Spain will suffer as much as ourselves; should it fail, every thing will go on better on all sides; but you will have learnt that the detachments of the enemy in Italy have but too well succeeded, since he has made himself master of the kingdom of Naples. The only way to avoid dwelling on this event, is not to look at the consequences. I must, however, confess to you, that it is frequently present to my mind.

LETTER LVI.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, August 21st, 1707.

I AM dreadfully alarmed at having so correctly predicted the affairs of Provence; every body here said the Duke of Savoy would retreat; however, we see by the last news, that he pursues his enterprise, and that he has but little fear of us, since he has just weakened his army by a detachment of nearly six thousand men, which Prince Eugene commands, though we know not where it is going to act; but, under such a general, it is, doubtless, destined for something important. The armies in Germany are in presence of each other, and we are in daily expectation of an action in Flanders. It is wished to attempt one at Toulon, in order to drive the enemy from a height which they have taken. Whatever you may say, I do not think you can be much at your ease, nor will the recall of Marshal de Berwick and our troops improve your situation.

It is said that the troops of the Duke of Savoy, in Provence, are guilty of the most terrible disorders, and even of shocking cruelties. Nothing

but such merit as our Princesses possess would excuse such a father; ours is full of sadness; I wish with all my heart that yours may not be the same.

The Duchess of Burgundy arrived here yesterday, and handed me your letter of the 7th instant; I am very sorry to see you change so suddenly. You appear almost as discontented as myself, and, indeed, the present aspect of affairs is not calculated to afford much joy. A happy turn of fortune at Toulon would give a new turn to every thing, but the reverse would only increase our calamities: it is this state of uncertainty which causes me to pass such wretched nights, that it is utterly impossible the days can be tranquil.

LETTER LVII.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, August 24th, 1707.

WE had begun to have hopes for Toulon, (where all is so disposed that it will require a miracle in favour of the Duke of Savoy to succeed in his design,) when the enemy suddenly marched into Flanders, and seem to wish for a battle, because we have weakened Vendome: it is so imprudent to avoid it, that we have every reason to fear it will

take place, so that you may easily conceive I am full of alarm; I have, however, profited a little by your counsels, and I also sometimes fancy M. de Marlborough beaten, the Duke of Savoy compelled to return into Piedmont, and a peace made this winter; which will establish you where you are, and leave us in repose.

If, contrary to all probability, M. de Savoy takes Toulon, our Princes will go into Provence with the succours that the King is collecting from all quarters: they are delighted with the idea; however, it would be better if they remained here, and that our troops returned from the points they have been removed to. The Dauphin wished to march, but the King would not permit him.

I am still a little agitated upon the subject of Flanders, and expect news from thence every moment. Certainly, Madam, we suffer for our faithful attachment. I am confused in comparing myself with you; but it appears to me, that I feel as I ought on the subject. I must not conclude without telling you, that Marshal de Tessé is no longer alarmed, and that he is well convinced the Duke of Savoy will repent of his enterprise.

LETTER LVIII.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, August 28th, 1707.

WELL, Madam! what shall we now say of our predictions? Marshal de Tessé has just rendered France the greatest possible service; the siege of Toulon is raised, our navy is not annihilated, that place is not taken, and the Duke of Savoy is quitting Provence; all this has only cost us two small vessels, and ten or twelve houses burnt; he has failed in his attempt, and lost ten thousand men by desertion, sickness, and the actions that have taken place. It is said he has embarked troops to land in Catalonia; and we are going to restore you those we had taken away with their general. But in speaking of him, is it true that he has quarrelled with you and the Duke of Orleans? If this had been the case I can scarcely think but you would have mentioned it to me.

We are expecting every moment to hear of the confinement of the Queen, and I hope, from the health of her Majesty, that it will be a son.

I yesterday met on the high road, in returning from Versailles, the Duke of Brittany; not being able to quit him, I went into his carriage; he is a most amiable child; resembles the Duchess of

Burgundy, and is also as sprightly as herself: he is in excellent health.

Our Princess has been transported with joy to hear of her father quitting France; the Princes are all naturally pleased, though much chagrined that they were not permitted to join the army.

I have just received your letter of the 10th instant; we have, in common with you, felt the loss of the kingdom of Sicily; it is not possible to preserve every thing, and it is a miracle to have held out so long. I fear with you also, that their Sicilian Majesties will be put to more severe trials; but the Being who has just saved Provence, and baffled the Duke of Savoy in all his plans, will, if it be his pleasure, protect those Princes whom he approves. However gloomy my ideas may be, I cannot think God will abandon them.

I am delighted, Madam, with what you communicate to me respecting the Marshal de Berwick: nor am I less astonished at the malice of those news mongers, who spread the late reports. I cannot conceive what utility or pleasure they find in it; I could not believe that he had quarrelled with the Duke of Orleans and you, unless the ambassador had written to the King about it, and I flatter myself you had sufficient confidence in me, to have mentioned it had such an event occurred.

LETTER LIX.

TO THE SAME.

Sept. —.

GOD be praised, Madam, and shower blessings upon the Prince of Asturias! his birth has given us great joy. I was not a witness of the first emotions of the Duchess of Burgundy; for she was at Meudon, from whence she returned very late; but she entered my room at six o'clock next morning to ask me all the particulars of the accouchement. I assured her that you had not had time to give them.

The Duke of Alba brought the news to the King, who was at my house; he was in a delirium of joy; the Duchess had not recovered from her extasy when she paid me a visit yesterday.

We hear from all quarters, that nothing can be more false than the report about the Marshal de Berwick, yourself, and the Duke of Orleans; notwithstanding I have seen people who with an air of mystery affect to know that the Marshal and you are not upon good terms. I have received your letter of the 21st instant, and wait with impatience to receive that which you will have written after having heard of the siege of Toulon being raised; it is a great consolation and source of happiness that this

enterprise has cost us so little. The enemy has caused much misery in the province; but when we compare what has been done, with what might have been apprehended, we ought to think ourselves free upon easy terms; our grand evil is the want of money both in France and Spain.

We must make up our minds to live with the ungrateful and the wicked, since the world is full of them, and especially in courts, where the passions are more excited by self-interest. I have had a sight of M. de Nancré: he appears to me a clever well disposed man; he must be ready to answer for what the Duke of Orleans will do.

It is a high honour to be near the great, especially for those who had been removed to a distance from them, by their circumstances and inclination; but, this honour is dearly purchased when we become interested in their fate, and consequently feel for every thing that happens to them. I have done my utmost to participate in the joy of their Majesties, and your own, but I am still apprehensive of the result of all those things. You will scold me for not enjoying the present, without thinking so much of the future: and yet how difficult to refrain from it!

LETTER LX.

TO THE SAME.

Fontainebleau, September 18th, 1707.

M. DE SAVOY will arrive safe and sound at Turin. It was wished here, as well as in Spain, that his army might be exterminated; but this was not practicable: the enemy made a forced march, which gave them two days in advance; they had taken measures to secure their retreat. M. de Tessé could not fly; he was separated from M. de Medavid, without provisions; there were many other causes which I have not heard. It is believed that the enemy have lost from twelve to fifteen thousand men by the siege, desertion, sickness, and above all, by the fury of the peasants, who destroyed all they could overtake.

LETTER LXI.

Fontainebleau, September 26th, 1770.

GOD employs whom he pleases to accomplish his will. Marshal de Tessé has taken every advantage he could. It is asserted that the Duke of Savoy, in returning through Nice, told his officers that he had renewed the adventure of Charles the Fifth, that his decendants might do as

they pleased, but as for himself he should not repeat the experiment.

It is said that the Germans and the Duke have quarrelled; the former saying that they had been deceived by him in being promised a general revolt, while they found only fidelity in the Provençals. The Duke de Vendome told me the other day, that the enemy would not confide in the Duke of Savoy, and that this would oblige them to keep an army of twenty thousand men in Italy.

Marshal Villars will do his best to take up his winter quarters beyond the Rhine; this officer serves with great capacity and zeal; he has levied heavy contributions, and his army has cost the King nothing.

Marlborough sent a detachment of five hundred calvary to levy contributions in the neighbourhood of Arras; Vendome prevented it, and sent a corps after him; the enemy has been beaten and dispersed, and the commanding officer taken prisoner.

The court of England is here: the queen appears much dejected, though she says she is in good health; the king is tall and well made; he is extremely anxious to take a part in the war, and to serve incognito; this project has encountered great difficulties, the Princess is also tall, and a fine figure: much more lively than her brother, and quite delighted with Fontainebleau.

LETTER LXII.

TO THE SAME.

Fontainebleau, October 7th, 1707.

NOTWITHSTANDING your reproaches, I see that my joy is premature as to the departure of the Duke of Savoy, since he is before Suza with Prince Eugene. But there is no appearance of having any thing to fear in Flanders. We have had some uneasiness in Germany, but nothing of any consequence. Our officers suffer themselves to be too often surprised, which makes peace still more desirable.

Marshal de Villeroi has terminated his duty in as low spirits as he began it; he wished to have an interview with me, in which we scarcely did any thing but dispute about his removal, and agreed only upon his being the most unfortunate of men; and so much the more so, as his resources, either as a philosopher or christian, are very limited, for he only knows the court, besides his attachment to the King.

The Duke of Savoy has driven away the unfortunate Countess of Soissons; she wished to fix at Paris, in spite of the King; but when she got as far as Nemours, he ordered her into a convent at Lyons. She is promised a pension of a thousand crowns. The Princesses have retained all her

children with them. This poor woman is truly unfortunate to have been so beautiful.

The court of England is very brilliant here; there are more than fifty ladies every day in grand toilette and magnificently dressed; they meet for the purpose of amusing the young King and Princess: they make parties on horseback round the canal and in the forest; there were eighty-two carriages counted at the last of these. The Princess is much admired at court; she is graceful, gay, very lively, and witty; the Duchess of Burgundy is warmly attached to her: the King is of a more serious turn, and very devout.

LETTER LXIII.

Fontainebleau, October 17th, 1707.

THE Princess of England has appeared charmed with all that has taken place here; she stands very high at court, where she pleases every body, and the Duchess of Burgundy has taken such a liking to her, that she can scarcely part from her without shedding tears; our court politicians pretend that they cannot think of her for the Duke de Berri, because she might probably become queen of England, and this would be a source of constant wars.

I must own, Madam, that the loss of Suza, and the unpromising aspect of the siege of Lerida, engages my attention more than the beauties of

Fontainebleau, and I fancy I should find myself better among the foetid exhalations of Madrid, if we had only a peace that would place our Princes in security and repose.

LETTER LXIV.

Fontainebleau, October 24th, 1707.

I HARDEY know what to wish for with regard to the siege of Lerida; according to report, it has been raised more than once by the French; however, it is highly necessary that we should be masters of it. I hope that his Royal Highness and the Marshal de Berwick will act for the best; they are both as well intentioned as we could wish; I only fear the third, who generally ruins every thing. I do not know what the King will say to the succours which it is necessary to send to Naples, but I know that he cannot provide for every thing; moreover the loss of Suza increases the necessity of having a large body of troops in Dauphiny; for M. de Savoy is more likely to revenge himself for the affair of Toulon, than to be discouraged by the failure of his enterprise.

We do not know, as yet, what Marshal Villars means to do for winter quarters; but there is no appearance that he thinks of returning, since his lady has gone to meet him at Strasburgh. It is too much for a general to command an army and take care of a fine woman.

LETTER LXV.

TO THE SAME.

Marly, November 6th, 1707.

I do not as yet hear of the Archduke having quitted Spain, but it appears to me that his allies desert him very fast, and if the Duke of Orleans is as successful as we could wish him to be, this Prince will find himself rather pressed at Barcelona. The Chevalier de Forbin has beaten and captured five English ships that were conveying troops and a great quantity of ammunition to Portugal; this will also derange our enemies. How impatient I feel to hear of the fall of Lerida! it appears to me to be of the greatest consequence.

M. Vendome arrived here yesterday, full of hope for the ensuing year; this is the man who knows no inquietude.

LETTER LXVI.

TO THE SAME.

Versailles, November 20th, 1707.

At last, Madam, the Duke of Orleans has taken Lerida; I am as enraptured as you can

possibly be ; I could have wished he had been at Tortosa : they say that the means for carrying on the siege were deficient ; this is a great misfortune, and the burthen of M. Chamillard's lamentations ; I never hear him dwell on any other subject, but I do not touch on those satirical strokes which he gives your friend M. de Pontchartrain. I exhort you in my turn, to forget the loss of Italy ; one cannot think about it without a sorrowful heart, and this does no good. How can you think we could re-enter it ?—and is it not a miracle to have kept it so long, after the misfortunes that have happened to us ? Does the high blood you possess, make you think you will see peace made, the catholic King and Queen tranquil possessors of all their kingdoms, and France preserved in its integrity ? This may be called a castle in the air ; but we shall be very fortunate if we can steer the middle course between your confidence and my despair.

We have all our generals at Versailles ; Marshal de Villeroi has been here these three days, and Marshal de Tessé arrived last night.

LETTER LXVII.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, December 10th, 1707.

WE have been truly aware here of the value

of the capture of Lerida, and of the great honour which it confers upon the Duke of Orleans. I am particularly overjoyed to see his ill luck at an end, as much for the past as for the future, and you may readily conceive that I most ardently wish this Prince the same good fortune in the approaching campaign; I could have wished with all my heart, that he had not thought of coming here; this visit cannot be of any service to him, and may injure the public cause: but my opinions on this object are only for yourself.

It is pretended here that there is no cause of complaint against M. Duguay Trouin, and the Chevalier de Forbin is very well satisfied with him: false reports are frequently told, while we are often unable to ascertain those which are true

LETTER LXVIII.

TO THE SAME.

Versailles, January 1st, 1708.

YOUR reasons for retaining the Marshal de Berwick are so good, that due attention has been paid to them. The Duke of Orleans speaks very favourably of him, and says that although his opinion was against undertaking the siege of Lerida,

he has done all he could on his part to insure its success, and acted as an engineer : he is upright and virtuous, but rather obstinate.

The Duke de Noailles wishes to persuade me as well as yourself, that the Archduke will be much embarrassed this campaign ; God grant that he may be sufficiently so to oblige him to quit Barcelona ! He cannot be intercepted, having the sea open to him ; but I should be very glad to hear of his arrival at Vienna.

LETTER LXIX.

TO THE SAME.

Versailles, January 7, 1708.

You are aware, Madam, that I expected the fall of Ghent and Bruges, but I did not think the former would only have held out two days. The Count de la Motte is a very brave man ; he says that he adopted the only means of preserving to the King the great number of troops that were in these two places ; they have now joined the others ; and if we had only as much money as men, we might hope for a favourable change in our affairs.

Marshal de Boufflers does not want courage, and thinks nearly the same as you do respecting

peace : it is said the enemy wishes to keep the field during the winter, and that M. de Marlborough and Prince Eugene will go into Flanders.

If troops are refused to the Pope, it is because there are none at our disposal ; we are in a very constrained predicament ; it appears that the Almighty is disposed to afflict us, and it could not have been expected that so many errors would have been committed this year as have taken place in Flanders. It was said, that on the return of the officers, we should learn many things of which we were ignorant, but they only bring back a great deal of rancour against M. de Vendome.

I have had a long conversation with Marshal de Villeroi ; he had formed but too correct an estimate of the events of the campaign. God grant that he may not prove so good a prophet as to what he announces for the future !

I have well experienced what you tell me of the complaints which you heard at Fontainebleau ; it is a long time since they have cried all was lost ; we have since then encountered sad reverses, but the most unpleasant of all, is our want of money.

LETTER LXX.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, March 4th, 1708.

You perceive the want of generals in our present situation: I dare not say any more on this subject. Do you think nothing of six or seven thousand men in Catalonia? But you fancy them all destroyed, and it is very painful to wish that this may be the case. We must not flatter ourselves as to money, and you should neglect nothing in order to maintain yourselves; the fall in the currency at the same time that the comptroller general was changed, caused from eight to ten millions to appear in a single day. M. Desmaretz does not despair, and all the monied men are delighted to have him in office.

M. Chamillard has left his situation like an honest man, without retaining any thing, and with a degree of integrity which cannot be too highly commended. Marshal Villeroi triumphs; he is also the friend of Desmaretz.

Versailles, the same day.

I HAVE come here to finish my letter, and to ask leave of the King to talk to you of the Scotch affair, about which I feel very much interested.

You will, I have no doubt, hear the particulars; at all events, the King of England leaves this on Wednesday, the 7th instant,—he is to be at Dunkirk on the 9th, and will embark the following day. The King assists him with six thousand men; and the great Scotch lords have written to him several times, to say that they will receive him. You judge rightly; that if God blesses this enterprise, it will cause a powerful diversion, and perhaps lead to peace; if you have any saints in Spain, let them offer up prayers. The affair is now well known; but it is said the enemy will not have time enough to oppose the expedition. My foresight, however, beholds them at Dunkirk, preventing us from setting sail; or if we do sail, I see them attacking us while occupied in disembarking the troops.

The wind is northerly to-day, and that is the worst we can have; however, I most heartily consent to the Queen and yourself seeing the King of England set sail with a southerly wind, which may take him to Edinburgh in four days; that he may be received and proclaimed King of Scotland; that Queen Anne may be compelled to recall her army, and that we may profit by this advantage. I also consent that this fleet shall take Marlborough on its way, as he is going to Holland for a fortnight.

I was yesterday at St. Germain—the Queen is in a pitiable situation; she has the gout, a

fever, a cold in the head, and an agitation of spirits, which you may easily account for; she is overjoyed with this gleam of hope, but apprehends all the dangers to which the King her son is about to be exposed.

The Princess has had the measles, and knows nothing about what is passing as yet. The King and Monseigneur will visit her to-morrow, and our Princess goes there on Tuesday: this will be a grand affair if it succeeds; I cannot help thinking of it both night and day.

It is the Chevalier Forbin who takes over the King of England; M. de Gasse commands the French troops. The secret has been kept a long time, but it was discovered at last, by the various preparations that were necessary.

I shall certainly be very anxious to receive your letters relative to the Scotch enterprise, which I think will meet your approbation: the King has always opposed it; for he cannot reconcile himself to the uncertainty of naval operations.

LETTER LXXI.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, March 11th, 1708.

I HAVE the honour to communicate to the Queen that money is a little more abundant in Paris, and

that there is reason to hope public credit will be restored under the present comptroller-general—but this is not the work of a day, and I do not know at this moment, whether it is possible to do all that you wish for Spain.

I must scold you in my turn, for afflicting yourself so much with the idea of a treaty, which only entered the heads of those who wish to vex you, for if I am well informed, there is no question of it at present, and we only think of carrying on the war on all sides: but not so with respect to the Marshal de Berwick; it is true the King has re-called him, and he has done so because his presence is absolutely necessary.

I wish with all my heart, that the Marshal de Villeroi could reconcile himself to the King, but he has not a friend who can excuse his conduct; time will obliterate every thing—I think it easy to foresee that M. Chamillard will be deprived of his offices, and M. Desmaretz invested with them, for they have been a long time in close communication.

Versailles, the same day.

I FIND sad news on coming here, the Scotch affair has failed; I consider it very fortunate that our ships had not sailed, for now we shall neither lose them or our troops.

Versailles, March 18th, 1708.

YOU know now, Madam, that M. Desmaretz, nephew of M. Colbert, is comptroller-general, and that the speculators have testified much joy at it: he has always been considered a most skilful financier. God grant him, as you say, the confidence necessary to re-establish credit!

The King of Spain is a great king, but he is grandson to the King of France, who may indeed take too great liberties with his grand-children: he thought he had good reasons for concealing as long as he could, the recall of Marshal Berwick, but it is also true that it was not communicated to the King and Queen when the order was given. Every body has been hurt at the Marshal's quitting Spain, though it has been often said that you considered it very prudent. I am also sorry for it, as it appears to me that you have great occasion for him; but we have no one else to oppose the Duke of Savoy, and we must endeavour to prevent his re-entering France. But do not be angry with M. de Berwick; he could not divulge the secret which had been entrusted to him.

You will have perceived a great deal of uncertainty respecting the Scotch expedition, and I cannot even tell you any thing positive at present, since we have not heard that the King of England

has embarked, for this is postponed from day to day. The situation of the Queen of England is wretched : she has a great wish for the expedition to land in Scotland, and flatters herself with the idea of its success; but every day renders it more dangerous, as the enemy is apprised of all that is passing. The King of England has the fever again ; his constitution is delicate, and he is about to expose himself to all kinds of danger.

LETTER LXXII.

TO THE SAME.

Versailles, March 19th, 1708.

THE King of England has set sail at last ; the account of his descent in Scotland will be still more interesting. May God shield him from all the perils that threaten him ! The wind is at present unfavourable.

Versailles, April 2d, 1708.

You are rejoicing at the Scotch expedition, and you think nothing of the anxiety we have undergone ; I wish with all my heart you may long continue in the extasy which your letter so well describes : whatever may happen, the design of the King must always be considered as excel-

lent; it has been formed upon a grand scale, conducted with the greatest secrecy; and if the measles of the King of England and the contrary winds had not caused impediments, he would be at Edinburgh; perhaps he is even there now, notwithstanding these delays: you will receive from all quarters the uncertain news we had the day before yesterday, and on which you will reason as we do here. Knowing me as you do, you no doubt imagine that I see every thing in a state of desperation; it is, however, very painful, though very just, that I should communicate my fears, and that you do not inspire me with your confidence; no one wishes more than myself to be mistaken and become the object of your raillery, if it be found that I have been wrong, and that we should realise what I so ardently wish. The Queen of England flatters herself that the King, her son, has been received at Edinburgh, and that M. de Forbin has not been twenty-four hours in landing his Britannic Majesty and all the King's troops; others are afraid lest this time has passed in negociation, and that the result has been a refusal: Heaven only knows how it will end; we are expecting news hourly, but there is very little reliance to be placed on those reports which relate to maritime affairs.

LETTER LXXIII.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, April 8th, 1708.

I WAS but too correct with regard to the Scotch expedition: you will not now jest with me, and we shall both suffer from the failure of so grand an enterprise; you will receive the particulars from all quarters, and much more minutely than I can give them.

I shall not fail to say what you desire with respect to sending you news; we are vulgar enough here, and politeness is in little estimation: I think it is the effect of firmness in our ministers, though I agree that a harsh firmness is not very agreeable. I do not however mean to say that we are always in the right. Heaven grant that your wishes respecting Portugal and Catalonia may be fulfilled! I have spoken to M. Desmaretz about Spain; from what I hear, he is to pay what you require. He also contrives to find money, and is restoring public credit.

LETTER LXXIV.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, April 15th, 1708.

I DO not believe in those excesses of joy; I have often heard of people dying from them, but never seen an instance of the kind, though I have been for some time in the world. I shall therefore content myself with less grief both for you and myself, and only ask for tranquillity.

I am the only person at court who has not been at St. Germain, but I am not the less affected at all I have heard from thence. The Queen of England has never been more depressed than she is at present; she cannot speak a word without sobbing, and yet you know she possesses great fortitude. She is fully sensible of the King's goodness, and it must be allowed that we cannot too much admire the conduct of the Royal Family on this occasion: they all hastened to visit her, and returned so much affected, that they seemed to have no other interest at heart but hers in the Scotch affair. I cannot help sending you a leaf of the letter she wrote to me after having seen the King; it will shew you what her feelings and sentiments are. The King of England has manifested great courage and prudence

during this expedition, which does him much honour; I hope that he will add to it in the campaign he is about to make in Flanders; he has been desirous of it a long time, and intends to assume the incognito.

M. Chamillard is in Flanders; they say that the journey is of service to him; I hope his presence will benefit the troops: never was there such an outcry against him, without his having done any thing to merit it except being sick.

We are now on the eve of fresh anxieties for the approaching campaign; I have been assured they have sent off the money which was promised to you.

LETTER LXXV.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, April 22d, 1708.

NEVER did enterprise meet with more general approbation than the expedition to Scotland. Between ourselves, the King was the only person who had a bad opinion of it, but he yielded to public opinion; for, from the Dauphin to the meanest scullion boy of the court, and the fish women of Paris, all wished for the expedition; but Providence was against it: the King of Eng-

land was visited with the measles, which detained him ten days at Dunkirk; the wind changed an hour after he set sail, and kept him twenty hours at Ostend; they mistook the entrance of the bay which leads to Edinburgh, every thing combined to bring the enemy there as soon as ourselves. The skill and good fortune of the Chevalier Forbin has saved our fleet; he got to windward of the enemy. We have only lost one ship of the line, it was thought that we had lost three small vessels, but we yesterday heard that they have arrived at Brest, bringing the remainder of our troops. The English troops which had been sent into Scotland did not return, and, contrary to my usual habit, I flatter myself it is because there is a disturbance there, and that the fear we have created in England will give rise to a favourable diversion.

LETTER LXXVI.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, April 28th, 1708.

I HAVE at length seen the Queen of England; she has recovered a little strength by a three days' visit to Chaillot, and seemed to be in her usual spirits. The King appeared to me much more

dejected, and ardently bent upon returning to Scotland, though he should be sent alone.

One of our small vessels that had separated from the armament came to an anchor off the coast of Scotland, and the officers even went on shore. The commander writes to say that the Highlanders came down, and assured him they would always be ready to receive their King whenever he was disposed to come. He departs in the meantime for Flanders, where he intends to serve under the name of the Chevalier de St. George.

M. de Vendome neither gives himself any trouble about the disguised king, the Duke of Burgundy, who goes to command the army, the Duke of Berry, who is hot for marching, nor with their numerous suites; this does not derange him in the least, and he sets out in the full persuasion that he is going to beat all our enemies: this confidence is good for the troops, but I always fear lest it should be carried too far.

The Elector of Bavaria is about to assume the command of the army in Germany, and will have with him the Marshal de Berwick, who, it is said, is very well satisfied; he has served with this Prince, who would not have agreed with Marshal Villars. The latter does not, for his part, like to be second in command, and I think he would prefer being commander-in-chief in Dauphiny, against an enemy with whom he may acquire some glory. M. Chamillard has returned and is de-

lighted with the Elector, whom he had already began to esteem during the first visit he paid him after the battle of Ramillies.

No, Madam, the King will not go into Flanders, for the same reason that the King of Spain will not put himself at the head of his armies; their affairs not being so desperate as to require their presence, nor inviting enough to do any thing worthy of their high station.

I am very desirous that you should profit by the weakness of your enemies, for I am always alarmed lest they should fortify themselves; and if I am an useless solicitor in your behalf, it is not from want of my zeal, which is often pushed to importunity.

LETTER LXXVII.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, May 6th, 1708.

I THINK myself very clever in having thought like your man of talent. Nothing can be more unreasonable than the return of the King of England to St. Germain; I could have wished him to have cruised about the seas, or at least that he had remained at Dunkirk, to give the English that uneasiness to which you allude; it would

have been something to have substituted the campaign for the abode of St. Germain, which is by no means so good for us.

It is true that there has been a great clamour about the choice of Marshal Matignon. If the King appointed the general whom he preferred in Scotland, why should any person complain of it, since he is the arbiter? but the following is the way in which this affair was settled.

The Scotch asked for a man of title, and openly testified the reluctance they would feel in obeying any other. All our Marshals declared themselves invalids, except Marshal d'Estrées; the King wavered for a long time between him and the oldest lieutenant-general, who is a very brave man, a good officer, and of a courteous disposition. Marshal d'Estrées has scarcely ever served in the field; he is much more intelligent than the other, but he is thought less likely to conciliate the French, Scotch, and English, who are about the King's person. M. Chamillard did not want this appointment for his friend, thinking it very difficult: M. de Matignon is therefore named for the reasons I have stated, and the King of England is so well satisfied with him, that he would not wish any other for the same enterprise.

There is too much liberty of speech in our court, where the generosity of the King is abused.

LETTER LXXVIII.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, May 24th, 1708.

THE King of England leaves us on the 18th; I took leave of him a second time last Thursday. God grant that this journey may be more prosperous than the last! I fancy him exposed to all sorts of perils, incognito with respect to those who will be about his person, though well known to his enemies: you will not fail to tell the Queen that this is another of my melancholy reveries; but it appears to me that for some time past, those who foretell misfortunes, find that they have had too much reason on their side.

Our Princes set out to-morrow, and the army is to assemble on the 20th. It is reported that M. de Savoy has already collected his forces, and that he threatens several points in Dauphiny; Marshal Villars has not yet arrived here, though he is expected to pass through Paris.

LETTER LXXIX.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, June 3rd, 1708.

WE have had a grand scene at Marly. Madame de Roquelaure sent to beg I would allow her to enter my apartment by a back door; I found her in the greatest affliction; she said she came to ask justice of the King for the abduction of her daughter by the Prince de Leon: the circumstances are as follows. It was wished to marry the Prince to Mademoiselle Roquelaure, and after a long treaty on the subject it was broken off, because the Duke de Rohan would not give money enough to his son; however, as the negociation lasted a long time, the two parties immediately interested agreed and mutually promised each other marriage: the young lady was in the convent of la Croix, in the Faubourg Saint Antoine, with her governess, and was ordered never to be allowed to go out, except with Madame de Viefville. In the meanwhile the Prince de Leon ordered the arms and livery of this lady for a coach: and sent it to the convent with a message requesting that Mademoiselle Roquelaure should go and see her mother, who was at the house of Madame de Viefville. She accordingly got into the vehicle with her governess,

who, perceiving that it did not take the right road, which she knew, wished to cry for help, but her mouth was stopped with a handkerchief: having met the Prince de Leon, they proceeded to a small country house belonging to the Duke de Lorges; here a priest said mass and married them. After remaining a few hours, the bride returned to the convent with her governess. The Prince has written as follows to the Duke d'Aumont. "I entreat you to tell "Madame de Roquelaure that I have married "her daughter; that I have brought back the "Princess de Leon to her convent, where I hope "she will not remain long." You know, Madam, the charity of courtiers: this adventure has amused them very much. The Duchess of Burgundy was almost beside herself, declaring that she is fond of such incidents. The lady is near twenty-five, and tired to death of the convent: she is said to be highly accomplished, and very amiable, but by no means handsome. They say that the Duke de Roquelaure wishes to prosecute the bridegroom with the utmost rigour; many persons pretend that it cannot be treated either as an abduction or a rape. I hope that after all this uproar, the parties will become cool, and I think the best way will be to marry them in form.

You will be better informed than I can detail to you, that on the side of Germany the enemy is about to have two armies: one to be commanded by the Duke of Hanover, and the other

by Prince Eugene. The Elector is preparing to meet this arrangement: he is very well satisfied with the Duke de Berwick.

The Duke of Burgundy has begun extremely well; he gains the esteem of his officers, and makes himself respected on the subject of discipline; enters into all the details of the service, and wishes to be informed of every thing. There is no flattery in what I tell you; I know it from persons, who would have told me the contrary, had it not been true. The Duke de Berri also appears to enjoy his present mode of life.

M. de Vendome would always wish to be engaged in sieges, in order to induce the enemy to advance; he is kept for the same reasons which are assigned in the letter I have just received from you, and which I shall answer, after having told you that matters are tolerably quiet in Dauphiny, and that Marshal Villars is to be there on the 5th.

I must, however, say a word about the Chevalier Saint George, with whom it appears to me every one is well satisfied, and who acts his part perfectly well; though I feel flattered when I find my opinion correspond with yours, that of M. Bedmar, and of your man of mind, I can easily believe that the King of England acts more prudently in the army than he did at Dunkirk during the campaign.

Our grand evil is the want of money; for there is a great deal to be done; all the letters we receive assure us, that they are very well dis-

posed towards the Chevalier in Scotland, and that in England the people are extremely dissatisfied with the government.

I am much grieved at the loss of the convoy which was going to the Duke of Orleans, and I think you flatter yourself a little, when you talk of getting rid of the Archduke. I am told that the siege of Tortosa is attended with great difficulty.

LETTER LXXX.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, June 18th, 1708.

Who can wonder at the horror with which you have learnt what passed at Catinat? Is there a greater misfortune than to be obliged to give such orders? The King has no choice of generals: it is one of our greatest evils. Piedmont gives us great anxiety: it is said that the Duke of Savoy is still indisposed: the design of raising the Huguenots does not show much devotion on his part.

LETTER LXXXI.

TO THE SAME.

Fontainebleau, June 23d, 1708.

THE King has terminated the affair of M. de Rohan and M de Roquelaure: but as the marriage will take place without a reconciliation

between them, all the parties are to enter the church by different doors; they will meet at the foot of the altar; the ceremony will be performed and all will return without speaking to each other. The new married couple will each be allowed twelve thousand livres per annum.

LETTER LXXXII.

TO THE SAME.

Fontainebleau, July 1st, 1708.

I REGRET the time that has been lost by the Duke d'Ossuna, for it seems that we have but slender hopes of beating the Portuguese. I flatter myself with the idea of Tortosa being taken, and it appears, up to the present moment, our affairs are going on very well on your side.

The Duke de Noailles is unable to undertake any thing: they are sending his troops into Dauphiny; it is there we have the greatest reason to fear: we must have patience in the present state of affairs.

There are not two opinions respecting the Duke of Burgundy; his reasonings are sound, and the King is very well satisfied with his letters. Prince Eugene has disappeared: it has been said that he went to drink the waters; it is now reported that he has gone to have a conference with Marlborough. We hear from all quarters that they are both surprised at our numbers; I cannot, however, help having serious apprehensions.

The Queen of England is very well satisfied

with the King, her son, and with reason; he behaves admirably; and if the English were not so infatuated as they are, they would declare for him: he wrote the other day to his mother to say that he was entirely reconciled to his incognito, which gave him an opportunity of being in continual communication with the officers.

You know that all the principal Scottish lords have been arrested; so that we can scarcely hope for any thing at present. They pretend to no secrecy at St. Germain, and there is less here than formerly.

Every thing which comes to us from the Duke of Orleans corresponds with what you tell me; he neglects nothing for the public good.

The King expects with impatience the reduction of Ghent: for if Marlborough wishes to preserve it, there is every probability of a battle, which, as you justly say, is a great source of alarm.

I must not forget to tell you that in the long and fine march which the Duke of Burgundy has made, he has not lost a single soldier; the troops did not know where they were going, but were anxious to fight: I think their ardour is increased by the presence of our Princes.

Letters have been received from different officers, stating that the Chevalier St. George is so much beloved, that if he wished to return to Scotland, there would be as much enthusiasm to accompany him, as there was formerly a disinclination to proceed on the expedition to that country.

LETTER LXXXIII.

TO THE SAME.

Fontainebleau, July 15th, 1708.

OUR joys are not of long continuance; an action has just taken place between the infantry in Flanders, which was very severe: this is nearly all we know about it; for as yet we have received no particulars, and it only appears disadvantageous to us, from the retreat which our troops have made; the enemy, on their part, have lost some standards and kettle-drums, while we have sustained no loss.

We have the same news as yourself of the Duke of Orleans, respecting the perils to which he exposes himself. The King has reprimanded him very severely; but it appears to me that he wishes to see every thing, and that he does not confine himself merely to the functions of a general. I have a great impatience to hear of Tortosa being taken, on every account.

You are right in thinking that the pleasures of Fontainebleau are greatly troubled by the constant state of anxiety in which we are from every quarter. The action in Flanders took place the same day and hour that we were enjoying a gay collation in the forest; these circumstances are very unimportant, but they derange every thing.

LETTER LXXXIV.

TO THE SAME.

Fontainebleau, July 23rd, 1708.

You will hear that our good fortune has been of short duration. The reduction of Ghent under the power of the Catholic King had placed us in a very advantageous position; we had only to preserve it during the remainder of the campaign; it was for the enemy to take flight, and they were in despair. M. de Vendome, who thinks every thing possible which he wishes, would give battle, and he has lost it; so that we are much worse off than we were, as well from the loss of troops, as the fear of future consequences, and the superiority which our enemies now possess.

In this state of things, we have felt less sensibly the joy which attended the capture of Tortosa, although its importance is duly appreciated. Madame is delighted at it, and with great reason; she sees the Duke of Orleans covered with glory, and out of the danger to which he exposed himself so much.

You know the fickleness of the French, and it seems to me that their conversation also reaches your ears. Ghent placed us in a position to give peace on our own conditions; but now all is lost,

and we must ask for it with a cord about our necks: and yet neither one or the other is true. Our enemy had great resources, if even we were in possession of Ghent, and we should have ample means still, if Marshal Vendome would act more cautiously during the remainder of the campaign. Our army is fine and well conditioned; the troops have done their duty, they are not in the least discouraged, and only ask to take their revenge; but this can only be permitted with the order and precaution necessary upon such an occasion. The Duke of Burgundy was well advised, but he had orders to give way to M. de Vendome as being more experienced; our Princes were near being taken; conceive the consequences; this escape is the only consolation which I have endeavoured to give the Duchess in her present state of uneasiness. She shows throughout this melancholy conjuncture the sentiments of a real French woman, which I have always known her to possess; but I must confess I did not think she loved the Duke of Burgundy so much as we now perceive she does. Her affection is of the most delicate nature, and she feels sensibly that the first action in which he was, has been unfortunate; she could have wished him to expose himself like a grenadier, and yet expected he would escape being wounded. The King bears this last affair with great resignation to the will of God, and he continues to display his usual fortitude and equanimity.

The confidence which has already done us so much harm may lead to misfortunes that would be without a remedy : it is impossible but there must be a coolness between the Duke of Burgundy and M. de Vendome, through their difference of opinion ; and which many will endeavour to increase, by their ill-natured remarks.

Men are not perfect ; there never was a better disposed man than M. de Vendome, nor more attached to the royal family and the state : they say that he has been more exposed to the fire of the enemy than all the rest of the army ; but he is overconfident, indolent, obstinate, and always despising the enemy. Prince Eugene is not an enemy to be despised ; he knows M. de Vendome, and how to profit by his faults.

Marshal de Berwick arrived very seasonably to cover our strong places, and collect our scattered troops ; in these operations, he does all that could be expected from him. The public here are not less infuriated against M. de Vendome than they were against Marshal Villeroy, for they go to extremes in every thing.

When plans are formed, the possible mischances are not calculated ; and when there are not troops, nor money sufficient for every exigency, there is sure to be a failure somewhere : we know what the Duke of Orleans has suffered on this head. The Duke de Noailles is perfectly idle, and Marshal de Villars has not troops enough to act.

Provence is alarmed at the great preparations of the Duke of Savoy; the whole coast is threatened with a descent; these untoward events destroy confidence in money matters; the minister at war has been at death's door; our greatest force has been marched towards Flanders, because the enemy has done the same.

Your Duke d'Ossuna has caused you to lose the opportunity of fighting a battle that would have been very advantageous to you: if we did not regard all these things as being ordained by Providence, we might well despair.

LETTER LXXXV.

TO THE SAME.

Fontainebleau, July 30th, 1708.

You flatter yourself, as we have done, respecting the strength of the Duke of Savoy; they say that he has forty thousand infantry, ten thousand cavalry, three thousand mules, and all the means of executing great designs. Marshal Villars is weak, and must be so whatever trifling succours may be procured for him from every direction.

It does not appear to me that the Duke of Savoy has an eye to Provence; it is Dauphiny that he threatens, and the French already fancy him at

Lyons ; this is a city of such great commercial importance, that such an apprehension will greatly injure our credit.

There has been much uncertainty concerning the battle in Flanders ; it was at first said to be of little consequence, and in five or six days after we were informed that it became much more important. It is at last ascertained, that the enemy's loss has been as great as our own : many of their general officers were killed ; our loss is chiefly in prisoners, but much less than what has been said ; and the Duke of Burgundy, who is truth itself, writes to say that after every estimate it has not cost us more than six thousand men.

The army is in fine order, and not in the least disheartened ; it longs for an opportunity of being revenged, and has abundance of supplies, owing to the care of M. de Bergheitz, who makes the greatest exertions for the service of our Kings ; he is at present the object of my admiration in consequence of what the Duke of Burgundy has said of him, added to what I have heard from other quarters.

It is openly asserted in the enemy's army that they are going to besiege Lisle : on receiving the news, Marshal Boufflers offered his services to defend this place, which the King accepted ; and he set out immediately, taking post horses without even returning to his own house. I never witnessed more zeal for the public service. He has arrived

at Lisle, and writes that there is no appearance of the enemy making such an attempt; they, however, make frequent incursions into Artois, and wish to levy contributions on all the country. Marshal Berwick finds himself embarrassed between the necessity of protecting the peasantry, and his eagerness to intercept the convoy conducted by Prince Eugene.

The alteration which the battle in Flanders has caused in our affairs, the embarrassing situation in which our Princes found themselves, and the apprehensions for Dauphiny, have affected the health of M. de Chamillard, and increased the outcry of the courtiers against him. I agree with you, that they are very despicable and odious; it is indeed a real misfortune to those who cannot get rid of their importunities! They often address themselves to me, as less important and mysterious than the ministers, for the purpose of imparting their afflictions: perhaps this may arise from their zeal, but it throws me into a state of the utmost irritation and impatience.

Some persons assert that it is impossible for the enemy to undertake a siege in presence of the Duke of Burgundy's army, which could always molest their convoys, as these can only come by land since we are masters of Ghent; that this place, which gives us so many advantages must be held, and that our Princes are quite safe there. Others pretend that the enemy will do what they please;

that all our fortresses are abandoned, France exposed, and the enemy between our Princes and us; that we must quit Ghent, as it will be impossible to keep it through the winter.

Some again affirm that the Duke of Savoy can enter France, march to Lyons, and perhaps farther, and that the enemy can meet him from the northern frontier, while others maintain that this Prince cannot obtain a footing in the kingdom, that his retreat can be cut off before he recrosses the mountains, and that he will be much embarrassed.

LETTER LXXXVI.

TO THE SAME.

Fontainebleau, August 12th, 1708.

Nothing can either be added or desired respecting the zeal and courage of M. de Vendome; but judging others by himself, he thinks that nothing will resist him, and he has incurred very general blame by the last battle.

The King continues to act with the greatest prudence. The presence of our Princes is desired in the armies; he sends those of the most august character: he would be blamed if he left every thing to their decision, because they are as yet

so young: they are assisted by councils, on whose advice the King relies, and it is these councils that ruin our affairs. If the Duke of Orleans had been believed at Turin, we should not have lost Italy; and if the Duke of Burgundy's advice had been followed at Oudenarde, we should not have lost a battle of which the consequences are so disastrous.

It is not yet known what the enemy means to do; he is making great preparations, and threatens all our fortresses; but we know not which he will fix upon; for the last two days, Mons has been mentioned as the most probable point of attack.

LETTER LXXXVII.

TO THE SAME.

Fontainebleau, August 15th, 1708.

THE enemy has been preparing for a grand siege ever since the last battle: their convoys cannot be molested, because Prince Eugene escorts them with his whole army. It has been thought for some days, that the enemy would march towards Mons; Lisle, or Tournay, are now spoken of, and we expect to receive news every moment. It is said that the least considerable of these two

sieges would be a rash undertaking, that the season is too far advanced, that these places are well provided, that we could cut off their convoys, whilst they are engaged in a siege, and that our armies will form a junction. I look upon all this as illusory ; it is only we who do not take the places which we attack, and I fear the enemy will succeed in a few days, unless they are prevented. In order to effect this, there must be a battle, and who can say that we shall not lose it?—and all this with our three Princes exposed to more than one accident. I can see no good then, except in the concentration of our armies, and the opportunity our Princes will thus have of drawing nearer to their own territory. The predicament in which they were lately placed afflicted me so much, that I now feel pleasure, notwithstanding our probable loss of an important fortress. I have seen so much taken and given up, that I confess I do not feel so much about this event as of others.

The interests of Spain form a great object of my sadness and dejection amidst these unfortunate occurrences. I should feel less on our account if we were alone ; nor do I think a strong hold more or less, can be of consequence to the happiness of our King or of France. But when the interests of such a great kingdom as that of Spain and the Indies are at stake, as well as those of a King and a Queen already established and having a successor ; and that it is to dispute for this kingdom that all

Europe is united, it is difficult to comprehend how peace is to be restored.

Marshal Villars thinks he has frustrated the greatest plans of the Duke of Savoy ; others think that this Prince, after several marches, which appear uncertain, will turn suddenly towards Provence, to aid an intended descent of the enemy. Marshal Villars appears to be very skilful ; till now he has been fortunate ; but he wants cavalry. Troops are ordered to join him from Spain, Germany, and Catalonia. All those who have been called upon to send succours complain, and you are among the foremost of these.

I think with you that we have made too great an outcry about money. It is now fifteen years since it was said we had no more, and yet what immense sums have not been expended ? During this period, M. Desmaretz has restored confidence ; but untoward events have spoiled his work.

LETTER LXXXVIII.

TO THE SAME.

Fontainebleau, August 19th, 1708.

WE must not deceive ourselves, we lost the action of the 11th of July, and though few remained upon the field of battle, the night caused such

great disorder among our troops, that there were from twelve to fifteen thousand men, and seven or eight hundred officers dispersed. It is true that there are more than ten thousand men returned or remaining in the fortresses where Marshal Berwick had ordered them. Some days were necessary to recover from the panic ; but the truth must come out, so much ill success as we have had for some time, the extremity to which we should be reduced if we still continue unfortunate, renders almost every body timid. One dare not hazard counsel where play runs so high. In the meanwhile, the enemy carries on the siege of Lisle ; and if it falls, he has a footing in France. If there is a battle, and we should be beaten, we are undone ; whereas if they are beaten, we shall make the most brilliant of campaigns.

A courier has just arrived from the Duke of Burgundy, and will doubtless inform us of the day he intends to march, as soon as he shall have heard of the siege of Lisle.

It is merely what I think that I confide to you, but I hope you will not be terrified by my fears. For my own part, I see every thing in the most gloomy light ; Lisle taken, the battle lost, and at least some of our Princes wounded ; I see the enemy in France, the poor citizens of Ghent abandoned to the ferocity of the English, the King afflicted, our dear Princess inconsolable, and all your court overwhelmed with grief.

I have just been told that the Duke of Burgundy did not march on the 17th. I do not know the reason, but it is a pity he has not formed as speedy a junction as possible with the Marshal de Berwick. It is certainly lamentable to reflect on the diversity of opinion that exists betwixt the Duke of Burgundy and M. de Vendome. Let us hope that the importance of the objects upon which they have to confer, will reconcile them.

I well remember the outcry that was raised against Marshal de Berwick when he did not give battle, and the excessive praise lavished upon that of Almanza. Every body is courageous in his own way: I possess a great deal myself when people take it into their heads to speak ill of me, or of those I esteem. It seems to me easy to despise, but impossible to prevent them.

There is so much murmuring now, that every thing is blamed. The Parisians cry out against M. de Vendome; though they do so with rather less violence against the Duke of Burgundy, and wish to dishonour the greater part of the officers, asserting that many of the latter remained behind at Ghent, which is not the case: it is also asserted that those who were there, liked their situations so well, that they suffered themselves to be taken, in order to avoid serving any longer. I do not think it is possible to carry malignity further.

The Duchess of Burgundy cannot bear a word

to be said against her husband : I have in vain told her that people like her ought to despise or punish this sort of insolence. I think if it was in her power to punish, she would inflict speedy justice.

Marshal Berwick has not been sufficiently strong to prevent the incursions and contributions in Artois and Picardy. He had thrown the whole of his infantry into the menaced fortresses, and our enemy marches in great force to all the points of attack. How very wretched our correspondence is about to become, and how truly I regret to see you participate in all our troubles, without reckoning your own, of which you take no notice.

You will doubtless receive an account of the journey which Marshal de Tessé is about to take to Italy. I think Marshal Villars is in despair: our affairs on that side were going on as well as could be wished, when the commander of Exiles surrendered at discretion, without firing a shot, and while he saw the advanced guard of our army coming to his relief. God is against us, Madam, and we must neglect nothing to appease his wrath ; we have ordered prayers everywhere ; I have no doubt that you do the same. Our Princess fasts for her husband ; this is carrying her affection to the greatest extreme ; he is delighted with it—I mean with her affection,

for I think he is ignorant of her fasting. His letters to me are full of joy at being so much beloved by her he loves.

LETTER LXXXIX.

TO THE SAME.

Fontainebleau, August 26th, 1807.

I CONFESS, Madam, that I have had but too just a foreboding of our present situation; but so it is, and we are in such an extremity, that it will require a miracle to extricate us.

You are aware of the siege of Lisle: the Duke of Burgundy intended to march to its relief, and to form a junction with Marshal de Berwick: M. de Marlborough marched to oppose this junction, and Prince Eugene quitted the siege with a part of his troops, to join Marlborough and give battle to the Duke of Burgundy. It is said that the country where this action will probably take place, is very disadvantageous to us, because our cavalry cannot act. It is a cruel situation to have the enemy between our Princes and us, and to see Lisle taken without being able to offer any opposition. It is inconceivable that the campaign can end without a battle; and if we lose it, where shall we be?

It is very true, that if God aids us, this same campaign, which now gives us so much uneasiness, will be very glorious, and that the enemy may become as tired of the war as ourselves.

How sad is life, as well from the course of events, as from those men who have the direction of affairs! We see its difficulties daily; vanity, interest, presumption, envy, caprice,—all are opposed to the public weal, by sordid views or ignoble passions!

According to the last letters we have received from the Duke of Burgundy and Marshal Vendome, it appears that they had agreed upon their present operations; and by the relative situation of both parties, it is Marshal Berwick who will direct their movements, because he is nearer to the siege, which is our great object, but which has till now proceeded rather slowly.

M. de Vendome still maintains with his usual obstinacy, that this siege is only a feint to draw on the Duke of Burgundy; it will have cost them great preparations and the trenches have been opened three or four days.

You will have learnt what has passed at Exiles; but if all the designs of the Duke of Savoy are confined to this conquest, it will be a source of consolation to us. Marshal Villars is exasperated against the traitor of a commander who surrendered.

God grant that the journey of Marshal de

Tessé may be useful in exciting all the princes of Italy against the Emperor! The Duke of Savoy would be more useful to us, but they all forget their real interests, and no longer think of anything but their hatred against France and Spain.

LETTER XC.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, September 2nd, 1708.

WE are now upon the eve of this battle in Flanders; it is thought that every thing should be hazarded for the relief of so important a place as Lisle. Prince Eugene appears enraged, since he has learnt the junction of our two armies, and he presses the siege so closely, that I fear he will not give our Princes time to arrive.

The rejoicings were great in our army, on the arrival of Marshal de Berwick and his troops; they infused new courage into the others, and we are assured that all they now ask is an opportunity of retrieving their character. I hope that in the part our generals have to take, they will be all of the same opinion, and that the Marshal de Berwick will reconcile them to each other.

In the midst of our misfortunes, we learn that the Mexican fleet has arrived in our ports, and that

it has brought forty millions ; this is good news for the two kingdoms.

We are still in some uneasiness lest the Duke of Orleans should not give battle.

It would appear that the campaign will soon close in Dauphiny, and that we shall escape with the loss of Exiles and Fenestrella, which was caused by the baseness of the commandant of the first named place, having surrendered it for a bribe, thus rendering it impossible for him to relieve the other fortress.

LETTER XCI.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, September 9th, 1708.

I HAVE not had a moment's repose since Lisle has been invested. The King, who had foreseen it, though he had great difficulty in believing the news, wrote immediately to the Duke of Burgundy and the Duke de Vendome, that if the investment had really taken place, it was absolutely necessary to relieve it. M. de Vendome would not march, notwithstanding all that was said to him, always thinking that it was a stratagem of the enemy, to make us abandon Ghent ; he constantly wrote to say that he would not stir till he knew the trenches were open,

and heard the cannon firing; at length the army has set out. We have had great uneasiness as to the junction with Marshal de Berwick: it has fortunately taken place, and we have received no letters since, but those which inform us that our troops pant for an engagement.

Since we have learnt that they are near Lisle, we have been in the greatest suspense. I cannot describe to you the agitation of our dear Princess, and all the prayers that she offers up and orders to be said both day and night. Every body feels a general as well as a particular interest in what is passing. I see nothing but weeping, trembling, moaning, while all those about me are still more uneasy than myself; the King alone is firm in wishing to hazard every thing for the relief of Lisle, and the honour of our nation.

The Duke of Burgundy is not of this opinion, because all the officers are against it, and Marshal de Berwick at their head. M. de Vendome alone wishes to attack and force the entrenchments: the others maintain that the King's army would be destroyed, and have but little confidence in M. de Vendome since the unfortunate affair at Oudenarde. These different opinions place every thing in a very dangerous position, which has obliged the King to send M. de Chamillard, to see at least if he can rally them on the day of battle. We are at present in this cruel expectation; and as for me, Madam, you may easily

conceive that I see Lisle taken and the battle lost ; these disputes and indecisions give the enemy time to fortify himself still more strongly, and thus our difficulties daily increase.

We have heard from M. Chamillard, but nothing decisive has taken place ; but we are hourly expecting to hear whether there is to be a battle or not : the enemy is advantageously posted.

LETTER XCII.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, September 16th, 1708.

At length all our generals in Flanders have written to the King, unanimously stating that the enemy are inaccessible by the retrenchments which they have had time to complete.

The Duke of Burgundy was to set out yesterday and repair to Tournay, to send forward detachments which may intercept the convoy which the enemy are sending from Brussels ; it is said that they are in great want of ammunition. God grant it may be so ! An attempt was also to be made last night to throw succours into the town. M. de Boufflers does not as yet appear to be much distressed.

You may easily imagine, that I do not expect to see this fortress relieved, but rather anticipate its being overwhelmed by the whole army of

Marlborough and Prince Eugene, as soon as they see our troops retiring.

M. Chamillard returns on Tuesday: he is wanted here; but I much fear that the differences among our generals, whom he has reconciled, will be renewed.

Marshal de Villars has frustrated the grand designs of the Duke of Savoy: but the two small places which this Prince has taken are considered as affording a certain inlet into France for next year.

You are two well acquainted with our situation not to know, that it was impossible to send troops to the Duke de Noailles: he is however more pressed to defend himself than to make conquests.

Our present misfortunes do not prevent me from thinking of the succours that are said to have arrived at Barcelona and in Portugal, nor from being alarmed for your second campaign.

It is true that we ought to look to Heaven for relief. God alone can extricate us from our present embarrassments: happy are those who only wish for what he wills, and who are convinced that he presides over every thing!

P.S. Paris is in consternation because our generals do not give battle; the capture of Lisle makes them consider the enemy as already amongst us.

I am very glad to hear of the arrival of the

fleet, but I am assured that our Kings have but a small portion of the money; it will however circulate through the two kingdoms. I have lost all joyful emotions; we are too unfortunate and too ill served; but I shall say no more.

LETTER XCIII.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, September 23rd, 1708.

I AM very sorry, Madam, not to be able to tell you any thing decisive, but the army and court flatter themselves that Prince Eugene will raise the siege, and Marshal de Boufflers makes an admirable defence; the enemy has gained but little ground the last ten or twelve days; their fire is very irregular, which excites a suspicion that they are deficient in something; our army is well posted for preventing the convoys from arriving, and of which they stand in great need: these circumstances give us some hopes; though I communicate this idea, I shall not state the reasons which prevent me from indulging in them.

The journey of M. de Chamillard into Flanders has been of great service; he has himself seen the impracticability of attacking the enemy in their entrenchments; M. de Vendome is also convinced

of it, and has written to the King, who has retracted his orders; which perhaps he never would have done, if the secretary at war had not been upon the spot. Every body pretends that if our army had taken the position which it now occupies, the siege would have been raised. We suffer thus in every quarter from the faults that are committed; it is hardly possible to give proper orders at such a distance, and they who are upon the spot are divided in their opinions. M. de Vendome is generally alone in his opinion: while the Duke of Burgundy sides with Marshal Berwick and the general officers; all this has a very pernicious effect.

We have been told here what you say respecting the Dukes de Berry and Guiche, and we have not been able to ascertain what is the cause of it. It is true that the Duke de Guiche has always opposed the relief of Lisle, which I do not blame, because every one has his own opinion, and the event will only perhaps too fully justify his; but he was very wrong in publishing it contrary to the orders of the King, as it may discourage the troops: he ought to have told his reasons in private to the Duke of Burgundy, and to inspire courage and obedience every where else; but there are few men perfect, and who act solely with a view to the public good.

The Duchess de Guiche will be comforted whatever may happen, provided her husband returns;

she is one of the strongest examples of affection ever seen.

It is said that the siege of Lisle has caused a dispute between the two sisters-in-law; owing to the lady of Marshal Boufflers wishing the place to be relieved, and the Duchess de Guiche not wishing for a battle.

M. de Chamillard had reconciled the Marshal de Berwick and the Duke de Vendome, between whom there was a coolness: I fear much the revival of their differences. Our Prince is engaged in a most difficult campaign; but he agrees very well with the Marshal de Berwick.

The Duke de Berry is much occupied in learning the art of war: he frequently addresses himself to the officers for information; sends very well written letters to the King and the Duchess of Burgundy: and M. de Chamillard says that in the councils of war, his first object is to ascertain the best opinions, after which his own is given with the greatest promptness and precision.

The investment of Lisle is of such importance, that the result will be productive of infinite good or mischief in every direction. If Prince Eugene raises the siege, the negociations of Marshal de Tessé would, I have no doubt, proceed more successfully.

Yes, Madam, this state of discord is insupportable: there also prevails an unbounded freedom of speech. M. de Chamillard cannot help recurring to that which he observed in the army of

Flanders. Though almost leading a life of seclusion here, I am astonished at the language I daily hear: there is scarcely an individual, even to the young female attendants at court, who do not freely offer their opinion on the progress of the war, or find fault with all that is done; discussing every subject, however delicate it may be, and censuring without mercy all those who become objects of caprice or hatred. If any person ventures to think differently from them, or reprehend such a line of conduct, they are sure to be accused of haughtiness and ill-nature. Every thing is in the greatest disorder and confusion; but if Lisle were saved, I should not feel this state of things so acutely.

LETTER XCIV.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, Sept. 30th, 1708.

I HAVE nothing agreeable to tell you, and it is only a personal interview with you that could now afford me any solace: but as I see very little probability of this, I must be content with the contents of the gazette, and send you the news of the day, without adding any reflections of my own.

Marshal de Boufflers is an honour to France for all he has done; I never knew a man so generally

praised ; his defence is very vigorous, and he has been as vigorously attacked for several days. As we always wish to flatter ourselves, we think the enemy are making a last effort, and that their ammunition fails them.

Prince Eugene no longer commands at the siege ; he has been wounded : they say that the wound is trifling ; but his speedy return is apprehended : Marlborough has occupied his place. The enemy expects a convoy which is coming from Ostend : Marshal Berwick and the Count de la Motte are at the head of troops to prevent its arrival, and a battle is no longer doubted.

On quitting St. Cyr, yesterday, news was brought me that the Chevalier de Luxembourg had entered Lisle with two thousand men, and a hundred thousand pounds of powder : this is extremely fortunate, for it was a very perilous enterprise. According to the usual custom, I found every body overjoyed, and under no apprehension for Lisle, the siege of which is to be raised immediately. I am not disposed to go so far, and am greatly afraid lest the convoy from Ostend should be able to pass ; the enemy exerts every nerve for this object, and has sent strong detachments, whose route is shorter than ours : we are expecting news with the greatest impatience, and perhaps there will be some to send you before M. de Torcy closes his packet.

The news of yesterday has enabled our Princess to breathe again. Some say that the wound of

Prince Eugene is of no consequence, others that he is about to be trepanned.

Marly, October 7th, 1708.

I heard yesterday evening that a courier had arrived, bringing information that M. de Vendome is posted near Ostend, to prevent the convoy from proceeding; and of which the enemy, it is said, are still in great want. It is probable that there will be another engagement: I fear it will be lost, from the disposition of our troops. There is some good news from Lisle, but it wants confirmation.

The loss of Sardinia is a new affliction for us: on whatever side we turn, there is nothing to be seen but sources of grief.

LETTER XCV.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, October 14th, 1708.

Who could think, Madam, that in such bustling affairs as those of Flanders, eight days have produced no change? It is true that Marshal de Boufflers is a little more pressed than he was; but he still resists, and many people flatter themselves that he will continue to do so till he has disheartened the enemy. M. de Marlborough

wishes to pass his convoy, while M. de Vendome replies, that he will prevent it, and has sent back some troops to the Duke of Burgundy, finding that he has enough without them. Grant that his great confidence may not again deceive him !

We have been a long time flattered that the enemy wanted ammunition, though they daily make very vigorous attacks ; I shall not enter into the particulars of what they have already taken, lest I should make some mistake. I do not think that our generals are as united as could be wished. As Marshal de Berwick has received orders from M. de Vendome, he has since then served merely as a private individual near the person of the Duke of Burgundy. This Prince is accused of being over prudent, and of consulting his officers too much : at all events, it is certain that he has nothing in view but the interests of the two Kings, and that he does not think he ought to risk the losing our army, unless there was great probability that the success of a battle might be useful to us. It is said that the Duke de Berri has an excellent capacity for war, and conceives in a moment the happiest expedients.

The Elector of Bavaria has come to await the result of the campaign at Compeigne, accompanied by eight or ten courtiers, but no household or officers. M. de Monasterole provides his table, the King gives him an apartment, which he has furnished, and sent him all the horses he

requested. There is a person in the neighbourhood who has a pack of stag hounds; the Prince will hunt in the Forest, and avail himself of any other recreations he can find. M. d'Autin has paid his respects to him; M. Chamillard has also paid him a visit; all who have seen him have returned extremely well pleased with his Highness. Madame d'Arcos is to go there for a day, accompanied by the Chevalier de Bavaria, whom she will leave with the Elector for some time: this is all I know respecting his Highness.

It would appear that the enemy has turned his whole attention to Flanders, and that he leaves you in repose in Portugal.

14th, in the evening.

On my arrival here, I hear that Marshal de Boufflers has again repulsed the enemy with great loss on their part: nothing can be better than all he does, but we shall notwithstanding lose Lisle. It is also said that M. de Marlborough is returning to his camp, having no hope of passing his convoy, the inundations being complete, and M. de Vendome so well posted. Prince Eugene is again able to mount his horse, and has only a large patch above the eye.

LETTER XCVI.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, October 21st, 1708.

You pass, like us, from hope to despair; I alone am constant in my woeful predictions. Marshal de Boufflers surpasses himself in the defence of Lisle, and would undoubtedly have saved the place, if our hundred thousand men could have intercepted the convoys of which the enemy stood in need, and which they pass every day, though with great difficulty. I am very sorry that, instead of leaving you the impression of an agreeable idea, I have caused you uneasiness, to divine the means which prevent me from hoping. It is true, that Marshal de Boufflers has long complained of wanting powder; but we see clearly, that but for the convoys Prince Eugene would have been the first to want that article. The garrison performs wonders; the officers are united, and all delighted with their general, who loses no opportunity of representing their services to the King, and of getting them rewarded.

It is a great pity that Marshal Boufflers is old and sickly; his heart would carry him further than all the talents and ambition of others.

I conceal nothing from you, and when I cannot speak to you frankly, I remain silent. We

shall not know the truth of what has passed between the Dukes de Berry and Guiche till the return of our Princes, upon whose words we can rely. The King pays little attention to these sort of things ; but to tell you plainly what I think of the Duke de Guiche, and which is only for yourself, I conceive he makes assertions which, though true in themselves, tend to dishearten the public. What I feel with respect to the great is very different to what is generally practiced : I would wish in private to tell them the severest truths, as well upon public affairs, as upon their own conduct, but to uphold both in public, to my last breath.

It is certain that the excessive goodness of our Princes encourages an unbounded freedom of speech ; it is however difficult to unravel the truth, so that if punishment were inflicted, it might sometimes fall upon persons important in themselves, or through those with whom they are connected.

LETTER XCVII.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, October 28th, 1708.

AT length, Madam, we have lost Lisle ! you know better than myself the consequences ; I have not been overwhelmed with this misfortune,

because I expected it ever since the convoys had been allowed to pass. The King is sensible of this loss, and still more of the trifling efforts our army has made to save so important a place, which had held out much longer than could be expected. It is useless to speak of the past, and I think that M. de Bergheitz has made you fully acquainted with the present state of our armies, and of what they ought or can do at the close of this unfortunate campaign; but our generals are not more agreed upon this head than upon other matters. M. de Vendome would wish to cover the Scheldt, and harass the enemy as to their convoys, of which they are still in need, as well as to obstruct their retreat. Marshal de Berwick is for returning to cover our fortresses and Picardy, and thus allow the enemy to advance. Only conceive the embarrassment of the King; which you will easily do, for you have had but too much experience in great and important affairs. I could wish to be silent on the subject, but I am still more incapable of writing to you about trifles, of which indeed I have little knowledge, though the whole court is quite gloomy at not being so occupied with them as it is in general. The King possesses the same courage, equanimity and health as before, but I fear he is inwardly much affected.

LETTER XCVIII.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, November 11th, 1708.

You have ere this heard that we have lost Lisle, and that we cannot flatter ourselves the citadel will hold out long; we already experience the sad consequences of this loss, which you know how to appreciate better than myself. The King is touched to the quick at seeing one of his first conquests in the power of the enemy, and so fine and loyal a city given up to the pillage of all who have entered it. He is not less affected at the disgrace of our army, in having done nothing for the relief of this place; it had been positively and repeatedly ordered, and he gave his word to Marshal Boufflers, that he should be succoured. All these circumstances attached to an event so important in itself, affect the King, and I fear the impression the more, from his dissembling it by his fortitude. To say, after this, that any more risk should be incurred, it is necessary to be wiser than those who have fancied they could perform impossibilities; and I think you are as well informed as we are as to what passes in Flanders. Certainly their Majesties have a great interest in this loss: I dare not tell you all my fears; you would scold me, or I should afflict you, and I wish for neither one or the other.

M. de Chamillard has returned, after having induced the generals to agree upon the steps to be taken in the present conjuncture. M. de Vendome and Marshal de Berwick are still opposed to each other: the former wishes to defend the Scheldt, to prevent the enemy from receiving ammunition, while the latter asserts that we undertake too much, that we should cover Picardy and Artois, and prevent the enemy from establishing himself during the winter round Lisle. It has been resolved upon to defend all that M. de Vendome wishes to be defended, and to send a large body of cavalry into Artois, to oppose the incursions of Prince Eugene.

It is very difficult for the Duke of Burgundy to do anything but what Marshal Berwick advises him: he has been prejudiced from the beginning of the campaign, and perhaps even earlier, against the extravagant boldness of M. de Vendome; the affair of Oudenarde confirmed him in this opinion: the King gives him Marshal de Berwick for his adviser: it is extremely unjust to blame our Prince for unfortunate events.

LETTER XCIX.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, November 18th, 1708.

MARSHAL de Boufflers does not exert himself less for the citadel of Lisle, than he did for the town, but it will be with the same success.

If you do not choose to touch upon what is passing in Flanders, how can I possibly do so?—I certainly know not what ought to have been done, nor the reasons or excuses which may be adduced for what has not been effected; but I well know that, during the whole campaign, not a word of truth has been spoken.

The King has just sent Marshal de Berwick into Alsace, to the great satisfaction of M. de Vendome. We hear that they were both equally glad of the separation, and that the Duke of Burgundy was not sorry at finding some repose at least on that account; it is certain that this misunderstanding has been very detrimental to our affairs; it could be wished that a speedier remedy had been applied to it. M. de Vendome writes to say that he is about to exert every nerve to bring the campaign to a happy close; God grant it! but there seems to me little probability of his succeeding.

How grievous it is, Madam, to have only to

lament the misfortune of the Kings, who are certainly ill served! What you have made me believe as to the great qualities of those with whom you live, serves only to afflict me; I do not doubt their fortitude, but good fortune is not always the companion of merit: let us not despair; God will perhaps be appeased; I have always hoped for this in their behalf.

LETTER C.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, November 25th, 1708.

I FEEL for you while suffering under the first emotions of grief at the capture of Lisle; I know how acutely they were felt; and though the loss and the consequences will always be disastrous, it must be owned to our shame, that time alleviates our grief, and often much more than reason itself.

I have never seen the King so sensibly affected as he has been on this occasion, nor can he reconcile himself to see Lisle in the power of his enemies.

Marshal de Boufflers, whom I have esteemed for many years, and for whom I entertain a great regard, continues to defend the citadel as he did the city; but he has very little powder left; it appears also by the feebleness with which he is at-

tacked, that the enemy is deficient in something. It is said that Prince Eugene does not calculate on becoming master of the citadel before the 10th of December, and that he says he will make the garrison prisoners of war, in order that such brave men may not accompany those who are not so. In the mean time, the enemy fortifies la Bassée and Saint Venant; it is affirmed that they will pass the winter in the neighbourhood of Lisle; they procure corn from Artois and Picardy, of which it is thought they have enough for a year; but it is true they are in great want of warlike stores. Marshal de Villeroi has always written to say that the capture of Ghent and Bruges would be our ruin, because we could not at the same time hold them and cover our fortresses.

Marshal de Berwick maintains that we grasp at too much, in wishing to defend the Scheldt and prevent the enemy from passing it; in effect, we could not prevent them from sending their convoys, which caused the capture of Lisle.

M. de Vendome would not march till after the place was invested: it is said that if he had attacked the enemy on arriving, he would have beaten them: M. de Berwick thinks, however, that the King's army would have been lost. In this indecision, the enemy entrenched themselves, and so advantageously, that the Duke de Vendome himself and M. de Chamillard, who is very fond of seeing the armies engaged, wrote to the King that

it was impossible. Since that time, M. de Vendome has always said that Ghent and Bruges should be defended; the advance of the enemy impeded, the convoys wanted for Lisle and other points, from which they had drawn troops for the siege, intercepted, and by this means starve them. M. de Berwick, on the other hand, maintains that the line of the Scheldt is too extensive; that the enemy could pass by surprise whenever they chose; that Ghent ought to be abandoned after having thrown a strong garrison into it, and that we should withdraw into our own territory to prevent the enemy from establishing himself there, or from getting subsistence, as well to put our troops into a condition to serve the next campaign. The event will show who is in the right.

This misunderstanding has obliged the King to send Marshal de Berwick into Germany: never did two men separate with so much joy as these generals.

The Duke of Burgundy has sent a courier to the King, to inform him that M. de Vendome proposes taking forty battalions, and I know not how many squadrons, to force Prince Eugene in his lines; he says that the enemy has a large force in Artois, that Marlborough has thrown some troops into Furnembach, and that he is further off from Prince Eugene than our army; orders have been given at the same time to Count

de la Motte, to make some movements which may disturb Marlborough.

The King immediately approved of this project, and sent back the courier directly, for fear of delaying its execution : so that the troops are perhaps already in motion. I fear some mishap, and we learnt yesterday evening that Marlborough had withdrawn his troops from Furnembach. Grant that he may not have been informed of our design !

In another quarter M. de Bergheitz wished an attempt to be made on Brussels ; the Elector was also in favour of it, and calculates upon the friendly disposition of the inhabitants towards him. We are in hourly expectation of the result, but we are so unfortunate, that I dare not flatter myself with the least success.

I had no occasion for the memorial which you have sent me about the Duke of Orleans ; I know your uprightness, and that of all those with whom he has been in communication too well, to have doubted a moment of his being in the wrong, had he complained of them. I shall, however, keep this memoir and show it to the King, in case any thing should be published on the subject ; it would not become me to let it be seen by any one else, and even the King himself shall not see it without your consent. I know, better than any other person, how much you esteem and praise the Duke ; but our Princes have such a disposition to

believe whatever their domestics say, that it is quite insufferable, and often puts me out of patience: their own truth and sincerity cannot be too much esteemed, but these qualities sometimes are injurious to them, by preventing them from perceiving that others are not the same as themselves.

The King partakes of this truth and sincerity, and as the head of the royal family he never thought of [deceiving his grandson: it is true that he does not think peace so near as our generals imagine; but it is equally so that the King knows the absolute necessity of it, which you would also be convinced of were you here.

There is another important subject to confer with you about: it relates to the Duke of Burgundy: he left this fully persuaded, like many others, that M. de Vendome is the bravest man on earth, but that his too great confidence, want of vigilance, and relaxation as to discipline, may cause him to commit great errors; the battle of Oudenarde has not changed these ideas, so that it has been an easy matter to sow disunion between them. The detachment from Germany naturally brings M. de Berwick back to the army; the King gives him for an adviser to the Duke of Burgundy, with the power of deciding when the opinions of M. de Vendome and M. de Berwick are opposed.

What could our Prince do, who has not yet acquired much experience, and who finds himself

involved in a situation the most difficult, but follow the advice of a man who enjoys the confidence of the King his father? How can he discriminate and judge of himself, that the counsels he receives are too timid, and that he must give himself up to M. de Vendome, against whom three-fourths of the army are enraged? This is the cause of the outcry against our Prince; he has not thought of justifying himself; he has not given any explanation, nor has he charged any person to take up his defence; events have been unfortunate, the minds of the people are soured, his virtue has excited all the discontented against him; while his declaration about the Jansenists makes all that party his enemy; the hatred against the Jesuits falls upon him, on account of his confessor; the cabal which M. de Cambrai is said to have at court brings still more obloquy on him. Nothing is now spoken of but Telemachus, in which he has taught the Prince to prefer a pacific king to a conqueror: all this causes the outcry of which you hear; some say that he wished Lisle to be captured, in order that we might be forced to make peace; while others assert that he wanted to restore the place, because the King had taken it unjustly: others, again, say that he does not wish for any fighting from the fear of losing human lives. I should never end if I wrote all that is said on this subject.

Our Princess acquaints the Duke of Burgundy

with every thing, and sees by his answers that he is as well informed of what is passing as ourselves. He writes to say he should be acting against his conscience, and his duty towards France and the King, if he thought a moment as it is wished he should think. The Princess does not show me his letters; I have only seen those passages which are of less consequence: the most important I have seen, are those which relate to the interest he takes in the King of Spain's affairs; it is a testimony which I owe to truth; in other respects, it is true that he wishes for peace; and I again repeat, that you would also desire it, as much as we do, if you saw what we see

LETTER CI.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, November 27th, 1708.

You will have heard that the enemy does not wish for peace, and that we are only thinking of preparations for the continuance of the war: but what miracles does it not require to put us in a condition to make peace on good terms! Though not gifted with talents, I have some foresight, feel anxious, and am very uneasy for those I esteem: I think of them so often, that most of the circum-

stances you communicate had frequently occurred to myself; it is a long time since I have felt convinced, that when peace is even made, my joy will be imperfect, from what it is likely to cost you, and which cannot fail to be considerable after the disasters with which it has pleased God to afflict us. Miracles are required to change our situation: that of the King and Queen of Spain affects me very sensibly; but we have foreseen it for a long time. They have no occasion for good offices near the King, their grandfather; and you may easily conceive, that when the question of peace is agitated, he will maintain their just interests as his own. Do not say any more of your admirable Queen; you have only made me love her too much, and I should be better if I felt less as to all that concerns her. Retrenchments are making here in various branches of our expenditure, with the sole view of having more troops for you and ourselves.

It seems your Princess also wishes to retrench both in her play, her table, and wardrobe, in order to relieve the unfortunate. I am highly pleased with her for all this; and you are very right in saying, that these two sisters have surprising merit, especially at their age; it is only their father who attaches but little importance to it.

LETTER CII.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, December 2nd, 1708.

You will learn by this post that our army has not belied itself, and that having avoided the enemy all the summer, it has suffered them to cross the Scheldt, without opposing a single man to their passage; this is so extraordinary, that it would almost drive us to desperation, if we did not regard the event as the work of Providence, which wishes to try the virtue of our Kings, and humble the pride of the French nation. Marshal de Boufflers is its only glory, and shows, by a resistance which astonishes the enemy as much as us, that they would not have taken Lisle if we had given him the least succour. It is now clearly ascertained that they wanted ammunition, and that they could not have become masters of the citadel, if a passage had not been opened to them for all their convoys.

The object of my admiration, M. de Bergheitz, has been deceived twice in his project upon Brussels, where there has been no understanding with the inhabitants. I am consumed with grief at the situation of affairs, and that of the Duchess of Burgundy. She grieves much, and her tears are

those of courage and real affection, unalloyed by any weakness; she witnesses an outcry against her husband which cannot be comprehended; to him are attributed all our misfortunes, and he has not decided a single measure. I have already told you that he placed his confidence in Marshal de Berwick, according to the King's orders; there has not been the least dispute between our Prince and M. de Vendome, since they were left to themselves: and yet it is the fault of the Duke of Burgundy that the Scheldt has been crossed, and that the army returned to La Bassée by the route of Valenciennes, to avoid the enemy. When it was made known to M. de Vendome that the enemy were passing the river, he answered that it was not true; and having commenced his march to oppose them, he found that all the mischief was done. Nevertheless, we have still more than a hundred thousand men, which have been too well preserved, but by whom we must endeavour to profit, by changing the face of things in the next campaign, and neglecting nothing to prepare against it this winter. It is not yet known what steps the enemy will take.

LETTER CIII.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, December 9th, 1708.

WE have finished in Flanders as gloriously as we have conducted ourselves there all the summer; the enemy has passed the Scheldt, which you know; a part of our army is behind the canal, and the other has returned into Artois. It is thought, after the reduction of the citadel of Lisle, which we expect every day, the enemy intends to besiege Ghent, but will first attack the troops on the line of the canal. You may readily conceive that Ghent will fall, and that we shall have no means of relieving it at this season of the year, after having found it impossible all the summer to succour Lisle. I consider, therefore, Ghent and Bruges as taken; and the enemy, having a choice of winter quarters, laying in provisions for the next campaign, and furnishing Lisle with abundance of every thing. I may also consider Marshal de Boufflers as a prisoner of war, with his garrison, which is the sole honour of France. Prince Eugene says that he will begin the campaign at Amiens; in short, I dare not set down all that I hear daily. Every body now sees what I had

a glimpse of so long ago, and which brought upon me so many reproaches from your great Queen and yourself.

You know doubtless better than I do that the emperor is about to become master of Italy.

If you have a correct idea of our situation, you will perceive that you ought not to reproach us; you feel our evils and we feel yours; we have a common interest, and are all very unfortunate, if God does not work miracles in our favour.

Our Princes arrive to-morrow: the interview will not be very agreeable. The Duke of Burgundy has occasion for all his religion, to bear up against the unjust fury of the public. Marshal de Vendome will arrive soon after; he longs to reach Anet, in order to repose himself from his long fatigues.

Marshal de Berwick must be a very excellent man, if he does not feel a secret joy at such a close of the campaign as he always predicted, in maintaining as he did, that the Scheldt could not be defended, that we should confine ourselves to the defence of the fortresses, and prevent the enemy from getting a footing in France.

LETTER CIV.

TO THE SAME.

Versailles, December 23d, 1708.

You know I dare say by this time, that the end of the campaign has been truly pitiful, and that the enemy has already the audacity to besiege Ghent, hoping that it will have as fortunate a result as the siege of Lisle. The defence of Marshal de Boufflers has shown us how rash this enterprise was, since he gave an opportunity to our army for four months to succour him, during which time we only made one feeble attempt, that of the Chevalier de Luxembourg, which succeeded; one upon a greater scale would have had the same success, and more important results.

You are right in saying that we ought to behold the hand of Providence in all this: our King was too glorious; God wishes to humble in order to save him; France had aggrandized herself too much, perhaps unjustly; he wishes to confine her within narrower limits, and which will be, no doubt, more substantial. Our nation was insolent and dissolute; it has pleased the Almighty to punish and abase it. It is only your concerns which I do not see in so clear a light: a virtuous King; rights founded on justice; a Prince called for by all his

people; declared heir to the crown by his predecessor on the bed of death, against all his natural inclinations: a Queen who is the honour of her sex, and of the Princesses of her rank; a marriage formed by a conformity of sentiments as to greatness, goodness, and justice, and blest with a successor, who holds out the most flattering hopes:—that all this should be contrary to the order and will of God is what I do not comprehend, and which he alone will one day clear up.

Marshal de Boufflers has arrived, and departs on the 26th, to take the command in Flanders. The King has done all he could to reward him; he gives him free access to his presence, has named him a peer, and, contrary to all his regulations, he has given the reversion of the government of Flanders to his son, who is only twelve years old. The Marshal is one of the most virtuous men I know; he is about recommencing his military life at sixty-six, very ailing, and much displeased at the manner in which he was obliged to quit it. Crowned with all kinds of favours, honoured by every body, having a lovely family, and wanting nothing but repose: yet he quits the whole, from a conviction that he ought to devote himself, such as he is, to his benefactor and the state.

LETTER CV.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, December 30th, 1708.

THE capture of Ghent will crown the campaign of our enemies ; I do not think they can ever make a more glorious one, if glory can be allied with the facilities we furnished them. France will not blot out the stain with which she has just covered herself for a long time ; nor do I comprehend how we shall be able to continue the war, in our present situation, and still less, how we can make peace ; it is to be hoped, that more able people than myself will tell us what ought to be done.

I should have been very sorry if Tortosa had been lost ; these attempts ought to cause great vigilance in all quarters ; for the more successful our enemies are, the more enterprising they will become. The French act well everywhere, I meant to say, except in Flanders ; but we must except all those who were at Lisle.

LETTER_CVI.

TO THE SAME.

Versailles, January 14th, 1709.

MARSHAL DE BOUFFLERS labours fourteen hours a day; I fear it will be too much for him. He wished to assemble the army, but Count de la Motte did not give him time; he is going to send back the officers, with the exception of four or five, whom he retains to assist him: these are the Chevalier de Luxembourg, M. d'Artaignan, M. de Contades, M. de la Fréselière, all well disposed and clever men. Their good Marshal enters into all the details for completing the army, and we have troops enough to inspire the hope of some success; but money fails, though there is plenty in France; the unfortunate occurrences of this campaign have excited so much alarm at Paris, that there is an end of public credit, notwithstanding the ability of M. Desmaretz, who had entirely restored it.

Our enemies give double pay and double clothing to their soldiers, in order to encourage them, and make ours desert, which scheme succeeds but too well. No person attempts to assert that too many favours have been conferred on the Marshal de Boufflers, and in truth, he can

neither be too much praised or too highly recompensed. The Duke de Noailles, of whom you wish me to speak, is incensed at all he sees here : his temper has entirely changed, and he no longer even shows any signs of his former gaiety.

LETTER CVII.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, January 22nd, 1709.

MARSHAL DE BOUFFLERS exerts himself as much as all our ministers put together ; he endeavours to discover the origin of those shameful disorders, in which our generals left the army ; he is to set out in the midst of this excessively cold weather to visit the fortresses. Our Kings would be truly fortunate if they had many subjects of this description ; I could wish to send you some of his letters ; I do not think it possible for a better man to exist.

You are right in thinking that the officers are too fond of Paris ; there is by far too great an indulgence shown towards them on all sides, and they ought to be at their quarters.

The enemy is certainly more on the alert than we are ; they never slumber anywhere, while M. de Boufflers is the only person who seems disposed to watch them attentively : all the other officers

wish to return; but if they had to consult me, they should neither be at Paris or about the court.

We shall go to Marly on the 6th, and there will be some balls given there, but more through policy than goodwill. The Duchess of Burgundy is quite overwhelmed, and no longer takes delight in any thing.

LETTER CVIII.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, Feb. 10th, 1709.

COUNT DE LA MOTTE is generally blamed for having surrendered Ghent, when he was at the head of an army for its defence; the enemy themselves, say they would have perished by the cold, if this place had held out four days; and Marshal de Boufflers was about to assemble our army when he heard of its capitulation. The Count was afraid of being made prisoner of war, and thought he rendered a great service to the two Kings by preserving their troops: the hand of God is visible in all this, and he appears irritated against us.

LETTER CIX.

TO THE SAME.

Versailles, February 17th, 1709.

It is true that the Pope is reduced to the last extremity ; but all will be right again, on his accepting the terms which it is wished to impose on him. Our enemies triumph everywhere ; there is nothing left to us but submission to the hand of God, which appears raised against us ; his decrees are impenetrable : we see him uphold heresy and injustice ; and oppress three very virtuous Kings, and countries where he is better served than elsewhere ; he is, however, just, and it is for us to submit.

I hope that our enemies at Rome will be satisfied with having done all that they wished, and that our countrymen will not experience any harsh usage.

Troops have been ordered back from Dauphiny, but they are destined for Flanders ; we have not enough to supply every quarter, and perhaps we do not take the proper steps to effect this object.

It is not true that the generals are appointed : the King expects Marshal de Boufflers to see if the state of his health will permit him to serve ; it is only declared that M. de Vendome will not

serve this year. The refusal of the Duchess of Burgundy to play at the same card table with the Duke at Marly, has made a great noise, and is the general topic of conversation. It was not Monseigneur's game, but made up by the Duchess, and when he was proposed as a fifth at Brellan, she said that she could not play so soon, having something to do. I do not think you will blame her for this slight, after what has passed during the unfortunate campaign of last year.

LETTER CX.

TO THE SAME.

Versailles, February 25th, 1709.

M. DE. BOUFFLERS is expected every day, but so much indisposed, that it is feared the King will be obliged to change his arrangements for the ensuing campaign.

We want both money and men; I cannot comprehend the resources that you would have us find in such a situation. The King's fortitude is a subject of continual surprise to me, though I ought to be accustomed to it: I must not say more upon this head, as it would lead me too far; and there are things which cannot be written.

LETTER CXI.

TO THE SAME.

Versailles, March 4th, 1709.

THE King has named those who are to command his armies: Monseigneur will have that of Flanders, with Marshal de Villars as his second in command; the Duke of Burgundy will command the army of Germany, aided by Marshal d'Harcourt; Marshal de Berwick is to have that of Dauphiny; and the Duke de Berri accompanies the Dauphin.

M. de Boufflers is incapacitated for service, at least for the present; I find him worse than I thought he was: it is the continuance of our misfortunes which deprives us of his assistance. I think these appointments will please the Parisians, as they all asked for Marshal de Villars, thinking him fortunate, and the Dauphin still more so.

LETTER CXII.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, March 9th, 1709.

THERE is no more rejoicing for us; one disaster brings on many others; and if the Flanders cam-

paign had been more fortunate, the Pope would have treated us with much greater respect: but he is forced to act as he does, through the success of our enemies. I dare not dwell on the present state of affairs; I confine myself to ordering prayers at Saint Cyr, my own not having sufficient merit to obtain what I ask for. You know that I have always hoped for a miracle in favour of the King and Queen of Spain; I see none yet, though we are very hard pressed.

Marshal de Villars sets out immediately with courage and confidence, notwithstanding the limited means that are placed in his hands. All Paris is delighted with the appointment of the Dauphin.

I did not think the cabal of which you spoke to me so formidable as you describe it: I cannot think the Duke of Orleans has entered into it: and they must hate our two Kings, in wishing to deprive them of the assistance which they derive from you and the ambassador: I have heard some strong insinuations as to your fondness for governing; but it is acknowledged that you both govern very well, and this appears to me all that can be required. Nothing could be more ridiculous than the article in the Dutch Gazette respecting you; but you have only to proceed in your own even course; your conscience will insure your repose; and indeed you do not enjoy satisfaction enough to be envied the part which you act,

however brilliant it may be. A grand dispute has arisen among our Princes, which has, however, till now, gone on very smoothly. The Duke of Orleans claims precedence for his daughters before the Princesses of the blood, although married; the Prince has ordered that, in his household, married women are to take precedence of the unmarried. The Duchess of Maine will not follow the daughters of the Duke; each party has presented elaborate memorials, and I think the King will decide before the Duke of Orleans sets out.

The Duke d'Enghien wished to join the army this campaign; but the Prince opposed it with his usual warmth, and the King would not give his consent.

LETTER CXIII.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, March 18th, 1709.

THOUGH my letters were far more agreeable than they are, it would certainly be too much for you to receive three at once; conceive, therefore, what I feel at your having to read so many.

If I have still any hope left, it is not derived from our public men, who appear completely at a loss in every respect, but in God, who works

miracles when he pleases, and who knows how to convert hearts, and turn events to the accomplishment of his will ; it is this miracle which I have always hoped for in behalf of our Kings, who are much better than we are, and who do not deserve to be unfortunate.

Count dela Motte, with the best intentions in the world, has completed the catastrophe of the last campaign, upon which it is impossible to reflect without being deeply affected and profoundly humbled.

When Marshal de Boufflers returned to court after the loss of Lisle, he could not endure the conversation which took place relative to the proposals for peace, and set out for Flanders full of resolution. After seeing the wretched state of our troops, magazines, and forage, he thought the sight would have the effect of overwhelming him ; and he now agrees that we must make peace upon any terms. It is said that the Duke of Alba is furious on this subject, and is as violent now as he had been indifferent hitherto.

Marshal de Boufflers is better since he has been in repose, and I see that at the least glimpse of health, he is anxious to serve again. M. de Villars has set out full of courage and confidence, although he is fully sensible of the heavy charge imposed on him : it appears to me, however, that he thinks more of the honour than he does of the charge. He has sent to the army beforehand

to say, that he is on his way to join it with a supply of money; it is true he has received some from M. de Desmaretz, and been promised more in a short time.

If I thought you could prolong my life to a hundred years, I would tell you all the reasons I have for dying; but as your wishes are merely the effect of your kindness towards me, I sincerely hope that you will ere long place me upon the dead list of your acquaintances, which I carry in my pocket, and which I will give you whenever you please: it contains above twenty names of the court during the last two years; I shall soon be able to add the Archbishop of Rheims, and I very much fear that of Cardinal de Janson.

M. de Vendome serves no more, at least for this year; and I doubt very much lest the life which he leads should incapacitate him from future service. We have all been much deceived as to this man, and the King very ill informed of what was passing in Italy, the total loss of which he occasioned by the siege of Turin, to which he persuaded the King, answering for the success of the enterprise, and promising to undertake it himself; after which he left it to M. de la Feuillade, to pay his court to M. Chamillard. We had subsequently to witness his famous campaign of last year, which has reduced us to the situation in which we now are. He next gave himself up to the Abbé Albéroni, an Italian and

his favourite, in order to calumniate the Duke of Burgundy: he retains the Abbé near his person at Anet, and declares that he should be inconsolable if he lost him. It was M. de Vendome who also decided the siege of Barcelona. I had always been prejudiced in his favour, on account of the attachment which I thought he had for the King and all the royal family; but what he has permitted at his own house, with respect to the Duke of Burgundy, is very much opposed to this attachment.

If troops are not sent into Catalonia, it is because there are not enough to supply every quarter. The importance of the siege of Girona is, however, fully appreciated; there are persons who think that you could undertake it with what troops you have, and others that even its capture would not force the Archduke out of Barcelona, because the sea is open to him.

It is true that it is a very unreasonable fashion to wear the mourning of nuns, which should only be^d put on when vows are made, and the parties pretend to be dead to the world. Madame will be much affected by that which the Queen wears.

The Dauphin appears to be very much occupied, and glad of taking a part in the campaign; and the Duke of Burgundy is highly gratified in having Marshal d'Harcourt; they seem to be in constant intercourse with each other. Count d'Evreux, attached as he is to M. de Vendome,

will most probably not serve this year. The Dauphin would not have him in his army ; and it is only a matter of courtesy that may induce the Duke of Burgundy to receive him.

Our Princess, who is naturally alive to the interests of her husband, opposes it as much as she can. The King has named the Father Le Tellier, Provincial of Paris, for his confessor ; he is of low origin, but of whom every body speaks well,—that is to say, those who know him, for he has always led a life of seclusion and study.

LETTER CXIV.

TO THE SAME.

Marly, April 15th, 1709.

No, Madam, we have nobody here who can discover any new resources ; the want of money and corn throws us into the utmost extremity, which I think you would assent to if you knew all the particulars. God declares against us ; we must adore his designs and submit to them. I have often looked upon the want of fortitude which I find here, as the greatest misfortune of the King ; but it appears to me that courage is no longer what we require, as it cannot avail against the impossibility of paying the troops, and preventing a famine among the people.

Marshal de Villars has been very much indisposed with a cold : it only requires his loss to complete our calamities. He informs me that the troops are in much finer condition than they were said to be at court, and that they cannot be better disposed, but that the inferior officers are dispirited for want of subsistence, and not receiving any pay. M. Desmaretz hopes to be able to send them some very soon. We have not yet seen the Queen of England ; it is said that she is very weak, becoming thinner every day, and suffering from a slow fever.

LETTER CXV.

TO THE SAME.

Versailles, April 26th, 1709.

WELL ! Madam, you will now be satisfied ; we shall not have a peace : grant however that the pride of the enemy may be confounded ! Your opinions are admirable ; all they require is the possibility of being realised.

I should never have thought that any thing would have displeased me more than war. However I find that the commencement of famine affects me still more sensibly : the evil is now great enough, but the future is yet more to be dreaded. I have always heard, as you so well

express 'it, that God is often pleased to make known his power in the greatest extremities; it appears to me that we are fast approaching such a crisis.

LETTER CXVI.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, April 29, 1709.

It requires great fortitude to sustain you, for you have abundance of troubles without, while there is, I fear, not much tranquillity at home. It is true that I find grief does not kill, for although I am overwhelmed by it, I have not for a long time enjoyed better health.

We are at Marly, though nothing is spoken of in this delicious spot but misery: there is not a husbandman so much occupied as we are with the quantity of corn and its price, which increases every day, and not a market day passes without some tumult.

These gloomy ideas have not prevented me from entertaining many pleasing thoughts about the Queen's entry into Madrid, which appears to have been a very splendid and well arranged pageant. I am also delighted with the affection manifested by the people. Grant that they may be always united to their King!

You will learn from more than one quarter,

that in order to terminate the negociations with which we are reproached, M. de Torcy has gone to Holland, to ascertain by his own observation whether there be a desire for peace or war. I am persuaded, however, that our enemies wish to distress us still more than we are.

The Queen of England came to Marly yesterday: the King and Princess supped there, but the latter returned to Saint Germans: she is very much altered, feeble and thin, but on the whole, a little better.

LETTER CXVII.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, May 19th, 1709.

THE King and Queen do me infinite honour in writing to me themselves, which, at another time, would have afforded us great joy. You will then no longer answer my letters when they are gloomy; and how can I now write to you in a different tone? I believe war to be the greatest of all scourges; and the plague with which we are threatened affrights me less than the present famine. If you witnessed our situation, you would pity us more and blame us less. Can there be any fortitude, Madam, when one sees the people and the army dying of hunger? The latter does

not as yet appear dispirited; the officers are satisfied with black bread; and Marshal de Villars, who was here two days, says that he intends to have oaten cakes at his table. Marshal d'Harcourt sets out immediately. It is thought that his army can be supported by a supply of barley which has been procured. In the meantime, the price of bread rises every day at Versailles and Paris; and all the small towns revolt when a grain of corn is required for the capital.

There is nothing yet said of the enemy's assembling; but they may do so when they please, having large magazines everywhere. Once more, Madam, if I could speak to you frankly, and you saw what is passing here, you would be grieved and not angry.

LETTER CXVIII.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, May 26th, 1709.

I AM about to answer the letter which you wrote to me on the 6th instant, and which I received eight days ago, just after having written to you. The post had not set out, but I saw nothing pressing; and all that we have to talk about now is so dismal, that in truth I should drop all correspon-

dence with Spain, if I were less attached to you, or less convinced than I am, that you have also some regard for me. It would have been ridiculous in me to send you a pressing recommendation for a relative of the Duchess de Noailles, who has more influence with you than myself. I see nothing but misfortunes for France and Spain : I love as much as I respect, the crowned heads who suffer from them, and would willingly lay down my life to see them in the situation in which they deserve to be ; yet you wish me to interest myself for the Baron de Capres ; indeed his concerns appear to me of little moment.

Your situation is awkward, and it requires great courage to support it ; but it is not desperate. France and Spain may be disunited by a series of unforeseen misfortunes, but the two Kings cannot be separated, and ours will always consider the services you render to their Catholic Majesties as rendered to himself ; therefore, what have you to do but to remain with them ? It is said here, that whatever happens, they can maintain themselves a long time if the nation is for them : I cannot suspect it of treason, which is not a vice of the Spaniards. But what a wretched life to witness such a terrible war ! Our situation gets worse every day—there is no bread : I admit that the outcry was at first premature, but there is just cause for it now.

Marshal de Villars writes to inform me, that he

had not been able to take the field for four days, for want of subsistence ; but that at length, after the greatest exertions, he collected eight or ten thousand sacks of flour, which he was under the necessity of forcing out of the hands of people who were greatly in want of it for themselves ; his letter concludes by these three words—“ bread, money, we want every thing !” When the Marshal holds such language, things must be reduced to a great extremity, for he is full of confidence, courage, and talents. You cannot, in fact, conceive in what a situation we are placed, owing to the want of money and corn : it is with great difficulty Paris is kept in awe ; our enemies know every thing that is passing, and wish to take advantage of it. The King is more to be pitied in every respect than any one else ; others are young and may live to see many changes.

LETTER CXIX.

TO THE SAME.

Versailles, June 3rd, 1709.

You will be informed of the situation we are in, and of the insolence of our enemies ; I shall relate no particulars : Frenchmen are no longer

Frenchmen if they are not alive to such indignities ; I am sick of all this, and shall say no more about it. You have lost the head of your family ; the King has given his office to the Prince of Tarentum ; he would have found some difficulty in filling it with a better man ; I fear you must be afflicted, for you are a good relative. You are much to be pitied, and have now reached the crisis which I apprehended ; I should fear much for the Queen, if she had less firmness, in having to undergo her accouchement under such circumstances.

Marshal de Villars continues satisfied with the army, but we have everything to fear as to subsistence ; the enemy has enforced the order not to suffer a grain of corn to pass. It is not for me to despise the weak and simple ; I even think them estimable, but much to be pitied ; for if people can weep for Madame Fagon without knowing her, how many tears ought they not to shed for kings who are situated like ours ? The King's health continues good ; our Princes no longer go to the army, owing to the want of subsistence.

LETTER CXX.

TO THE SAME.

Versailles, June 10th, 1709.

AN important event has just taken place at court: M. de Chamillard is exiled, but in the mildest manner; he may go where he pleases, provided he absents himself from court; his wife, himself, and son have large pensions granted them; the latter will have the reversion of the office of ———. In a word, the King has removed this Minister, because the charge was too heavy for him; and he treats him well, because he is a worthy man, attached to his person, and who had given all he possessed to the state. The public voice points out M. Voisin for his successor; he is one of my best friends, and is married to an excellent woman. I hope the choice may prove fortunate, and that I shall not see this head turned, as I have seen so many others!

We have had a little display of French spirit: when the King resolved to continue the war, the people were irritated at the proposals of the enemy, and the courtiers have offered all their plate. M. de Boufflers, Marshal de la Rochefoucauld, and the Duke de Gramont, were the

first to come forward: these examples are, however, but very slowly followed, and it is said we shall derive but little aid from this source. M. de Chamillard made the fourth upon the list. The Duke of Maine and the Count de Toulouse have offered all they possess. As to the King, he has sent his gold, plate, and the jewellery of the crown to be pledged, if foreigners will advance us any thing upon them; he also retrenches in the expences of his table at Marly, and sets a similar example in everything: I should add that the Duchess of Burgundy has most willingly consented to be more economical in her dress.

The Chevalier de St. George will depart in a few days for Flanders, with a very small retinue.

The Queen must have deceived herself; but as you justly observe, we must submit in this as in everything else. We have heard nothing yet of the courier who brought the news of the rupture of the negociations; but Prince Eugene is assembling his army, and will soon approach Marshal de Villars. Our great calamity is famine: there is everything to fear from people who are dying with hunger, and amongst whom, every effort is made to excite revolt; it is maliciously reported that the King has got possession of all the corn, and is enriching himself by selling it again at a very exorbitant price!

Behold you, then, as in Egypt, also tormented with locusts; in truth, we are roughly treated both

by mankind and the elements. How often do I pray that your King may be able to maintain himself alone! If we carry on the war on our side, our enemies, powerful as they are, will have something to do; and what would become of them, if we were not always unfortunate?

LETTER CXXI.

TO THE SAME.

Marly, June 17th, 1709.

You are angry with us, and we must pardon you; but notwithstanding all that has been done, we shall not have peace. The King could not accede to the terms which the enemy demanded, and M. Rouillié has returned: so that the negotiations are at an end; grant that we may be the better for it! What remained of French spirit has irritated the people upon this unfortunate peace, but that does not obviate the difficulty in which we are placed with regard to money and corn.

I wrote to you of M. Chamillard's disgrace. M. Voisin, his successor, will, I have no doubt, be more active and vigilant; he is a relative and friend of M. Desmaretz, and they both promise an union highly advantageous to public affairs.

We must then leave you with the Spaniards, since we can no longer assist you, and we shall have so much difficulty in helping ourselves. Avenge yourselves of our misconduct, by resisting with your own forces, all your enemies ; there are military characters here who pretend that you can do this ; while others assert you will be overwhelmed. Marshal de Villars is very inferior to the enemy, but his courage does not abate ; he only complains about bread and money ; no pains are spared to send him both. The beginning of this campaign is difficult : if we can go on till the month of August, we shall have resources ; if they worked quicker at the mint, we could send larger sums of money to Flanders, for we do not want bullion at this moment, from the quantity of plate and old coin which has been supplied.

I respect the virtue, rank, and misfortune of the Countess de Soissons ; she has been accused, in France and Savoy, of speaking against the sovereigns : you know that the Duke of Savoy would not suffer her to remain in his states ; the King received her from motives of generosity here ; she is in a fine convent and a large city ; but do you not think it would be somewhat disagreeable for the Duchess of Burgundy to have a Princess of her own family so near her, and one whose conduct would lead to the greatest exposure ? These are my reasons, if you disapprove of them, I must only submit.

LETTER CXXII.

TO THE SAME.

Marly, June 24th, 1709.

You may well say, there can no longer be any joy for the real friends of their country, and I feel assured you will be more than ever convinced of it, on seeing the line of conduct which the King is forced to adopt. The peace will always be very bad, and we cannot continue the war; we must therefore submit to God when he wishes to overthrow kings and kingdoms; this is what I have always feared, and which, without pretending to know more than others, I continually anticipated. We have experienced a series of misfortunes, from which France cannot recover but by a long peace; and famine, which is the last and greatest of all, reduces us to the last extremity. I own that all my fears had not extended so far as to foresee that we should be brought to wish for the dethronement of the King and Queen of Spain: words cannot depict the grief occasioned by all these circumstances. The King is deeply affected with it; the Duchess of Burgundy is overwhelmed, and as to my own grief, it is unspeakable.

If you separate from their Majesties, it will not

apparently be for a very long time: our misfortunes will reunite us all: I confess to you that I would rather not see them. It is not possible, after the above, to send you any news of the court: all are sad and at their prayers; this is our only resource at present.

A great battle is expected in Flanders; the enemy is very superior; and although the French should perform wonders, they may be overpowered by numbers.

LETTER CXXIII.

TO THE SAME.

Versailles, July 1st, 1709.

CAN you still say that I carry my fears too far? Have I anything to reproach myself with except too much foresight? Have not our misfortunes reached that point which I apprehended? I had for a long time met with people who blamed me for viewing things in so gloomy a light. I now meet with none who do not assure me that I am in the right, and push their own fears still farther than I do: I afflict myself sooner than others; but when calamities arrive, I am not at a loss for courage, more especially as I am not so surprised as those who had previously deluded them-

selves; scold me at a distance as long as you please; I am well convinced that we should agree upon everything if we were together. Our situation is so irksome, that it cannot continue long: we must fall entirely, or recover ourselves a little; if the enemy does nothing considerable this summer, I think there is a gleam of hope for us.

I have the highest opinion of the Queen's fortitude; but I cannot conceive how she can dispense with your society, after having once enjoyed it.

Everything is suspended for the present: some months must elapse before we can see what will be the result; if Marshal de Villars is to be believed, the enemy will do us no great mischief. He is now besieging Tournay: if this place holds out long, I should scarcely feel its loss, after the apprehension of seeing Prince Eugene at Paris.

LETTER CXXIV.

TO THE SAME.

Versailles, July 8th, 1709.

I ALWAYS speak to you very candidly, and when there are any matters which I cannot communicate, I never touch on them. Marshal de

Boufflers does not agree with me, in saying that M. de Chamillard is a good man: he maintains it to be impossible, having contributed, as he has done, to the ruin of France; but I am convinced it was through incapacity; he had too much on his hands; his measures were defective in everything; and, as you observe, he leaves the war department in as great disorder as the finances. Princes are truly unfortunate in being unable to dispense with assistance; but this is an irremediable evil.

M. Voisin has made a very good beginning: he possesses talents, great firmness, and is very active; his wife is an amiable woman. I could not have told you that I thought M. Chamillard more fortunate than M. de Villeroi; I have perhaps said that I pity M. Voisin more than the former, as I really do; for besides being fond of repose myself, the present aspect of affairs is not calculated to give great satisfaction to those who are concerned in them.

I do not think the war can be continued, owing to the want of money and corn, and the superiority of our enemies in every quarter: they are besieging Tournay with a hundred and twenty thousand men, and a prodigious quantity of artillery; what can be done against such a host, and what have we not to fear after the capture of Tournay? there is an end of delusion, everything seems to me completely exposed.

I do not imagine the King of England thinks of going to meet the King of Sweden ; these two Princes are too great devotees in their different religions, to agree together ; but I am quite uninformed on this subject.

The scarcity of money and corn causes tumults everywhere. There has been one at Rouen ; the King sent M. de Luxembourg, who has, thank God, succeeded in allaying it.

LETTER CXXV.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, July 14th, 1709.

THE gloomy ideas which I have respecting Spain, cannot prevent me from being sorry for the feebleness of the Infant ; as I regard him as a new link between the Spaniards and their Catholic Majesties. I hope the small-pox of the Prince of Asturias will prove of little consequence ; for it does not seem to be dangerous in hot countries, and it will be fortunate for him to have got over it. I praise God for the good health of the Queen, and I see with pain, from what has happened, that her sensibility is not less than that of the Duchess of Burgundy ; the fortitude and virtue of these two Princesses

are exercised at an early period of life; but I cannot think they will always be unfortunate. Ours is consuming away in sadness at our present situation, and Spain is no less an object of solicitude than France; I do not think I should exaggerate, in saying that your interests are even uppermost in her thoughts; because she conceives you have fewer resources. Yesterday I had a long conversation with Marshal de Villeroi; he considers the siege of Tournay as very fortunate, and wishes for peace more than M. de Chamillard did, and than M. Desmaretz can do. I assure you that you do not do us justice upon this point, and that everything has reached to an extremity which does not admit of our continuing the war. We have experienced great misfortunes, have perhaps committed faults; but the hand of God is so visible in all this, and overwhelms us with so many scourges, that it is impossible to resist them. It is not our ministers who have produced a frost, which causes famine; nor have they had any share in the horrible weather which we have lately witnessed; the hail storms which devastate many districts, or the inundations which deprive us of the harvests in those provinces where it was the most promising. We have tumults everywhere, owing to the dearness of corn; that of Rouen is at an end; there is one at Clermont, another at Bayonne; that at Languedoc will soon termi-

nate : but there is a constant recurrence of these scenes, and it is very difficult to keep Paris under, bread becoming dearer there every day.

Every effort is made to find remedies for this state of things, but all those hitherto adopted have only increased the evil. The army of Flanders has only a daily subsistence, and it is a miracle, that the troops remain together in their present condition. It is thought that in the course of a month money will not be so scarce ; but I do not know what hopes we can indulge as to corn. We were induced to expect that the price would diminish on the approach of the harvest, but, on the contrary, it increases.

I begin to perceive the cabal against you and M. Amelot, which you announced to me some time ago ; as yet, at least, it only appears to me as so many indications, which, however, it is easy to perceive, mean something ; my conduct is already traced out upon this subject, and I shall testify at all times and in all places, what I have seen of your probity, correctness, affection, and zeal for the two Kings.

LETTER CXXVI.

TO THE SAME.

Versailles, July 15th, 1709.

ON reaching this last night, I found your letter of the 1st instant; you will scold me no more, for you have the twenty battalions which you asked for, and even twenty-five; but all this does not afford me the same hopes as it does you; I am even persuaded that you would think as I do, if you were an eye witness of our situation; but you do not credit me upon that subject, and you look upon all those who are capable of consenting to the hard peace which is proposed to us, as being anxious to excite discouragement. I can assure you there is not a Frenchman who does not wish for its conclusion. Marshals Boufflers, d'Harcourt, Villeroi and de Villars are of the same opinion. They have embraced it more tardily, as I wrote to you several times, but at length they have done so, seeing that there is no resource, owing to the scarcity of money, and still more to that of corn. You are too good a Frenchwoman to wish to lose France in order to save Spain; and the anger which you show is only the effect of your great courage,

and the little credit which you attach to what I communicate. I do not think, however, that I stand alone, and it is not possible that all those whom you see arrive from hence should speak to you otherwise. Marshal de Villars conducts himself admirably, and we begin to hope the enemy will not enter France ; but this would not be the case if we lost a battle.

Letters were yesterday received from M. de Noailles, asking for more troops, and expressing his anxiety to do something ; he appears delighted with your firmness, as well as with that of the King and Queen, and the affection of the Spaniards.

The Duchess of Alba is the only person who thinks like you. She does not conceive why there are complaints in France of being without bread and money ; she cannot bear to hear any doubts as to the stability of their Catholic Majesties upon the throne ; she is offended at the idea of your infant being thought feeble. I have really never witnessed such zeal as this ; nor is it flattery, but merely the homage due to truth.

LETTER CXXVII.

TO THE SAME

Saint Cyr, July 21st, 1709.

I AM sorry for the death of the Infant, for the grief it will occasion the King and Queen, and because it was an additional source of attachment for the Spaniards to their Majesties. I am not surprised at the King's affliction; there is nothing more natural and reasonable than to love one's children, and it is hard for the Queen to have experienced the inconveniences of pregnancy, and the dangers of confinement, and then to lose the young Prince. To speak in worldly terms, the morning of the Queen's life is not fortunate; but she is young, and will experience the inconstancy of fortune, both in good and evil: it is rare for persons of her rank to be so much exposed, but God will have it so. I have announced this bad news to all the royal personages whom you name; they are very sorry for it, more especially our Princess, who has immediately fancied herself in the place of the Queen, her sister, for whom she has an excess of affection which I do not comprehend, from having seen so little of her.

It is true that I did not write to you respect-

ing the twenty-five battalions which were left you. I was not the less agitated during the council in which this object was discussed; but I am firm, and I preferred your learning the news through M. de Torcy to my own communication; besides, I have not always leisure to write by the couriers. Is it possible that I could have written to you, to say that I wished their Catholic Majesties to be deprived of their crown,—I, who would make any sacrifice to have it secured to them? All my crime with you is to wish for peace for ourselves; but I assure you, and I have already said so, that I think upon that subject like other persons for whom you have the greatest esteem in this country: it is useless to speak of our situation, for you will not believe me, and you impute to our weakness and want of courage, that which is merely the effect of dire necessity. Yes, Madam, it would require miracles to extricate us from the perils which threaten us. It is reported that the plague is at Mâcon, but I have no authentic source for this news: such a scourge is alone wanted to complete our miseries. If I opened all my mind to you, my letter would not finish so soon; but you say that you do not like imprudencies, and that it is necessary to abstain from them as much as possible.

The Duke of Alba has solemnised the birth of the Infant since its death; I did everything in my power with the Duchess to prevent it, but she

could not bear any one to doubt of his being still alive. Farewell, Madam. I defy all your high spirit and wonted fortitude, to be proof against what you see and what you fear; your situation often occupies my thoughts, and I feel that my attachment for you does not stop at esteem and admiration.

LETTER CXXVIII.

TO THE SAME.

Versailles, July 29th, 1709.

I RECEIVED no news from you yesterday, although it was post day. I have for a long time envied the tranquillity of your disposition, without wishing to deprive you of it; all my gloomy presentiments are only too accurately realised, and at length I perceive that I am not much more grieved than yourself: how could one avoid being so, in witnessing so near at hand all the misfortunes which surround us, and those which reach Princes to whom we are bound by so many ties? I think that it will be as well to maintain silence, on the affair about which you are not very explicit, and which will no doubt be placed to your account as justly as the greatest part of the others.

The siege of Tournay proceeds; the besieged do all that can be expected from them, and

the enemy meet with great difficulties ; but they have an artillery which it is impossible to resist. I think they will soon be masters of the city, but I hope the citadel will hold out longer. It is through want of money that we are destroyed ; corn could be found if it could be bought at a high rate. I cannot conceive how it happens that you receive no letters from this country, which do not confirm all my statements, as matters have proceeded to such an extremity, that others are as much afflicted as myself. We go to Marly on Wednesday for ten days ; there will not be more amusement there than anywhere else, but it is the favourite place of the King, and it is highly necessary that he should sometimes seek to divert his thoughts from so many causes of suffering, and which he supports with the same firmness and equanimity as ever.

LETTER CXXIX.

TO THE SAME.

Marly, August 5th, 1709.

OUR misfortunes increase daily. Tournay has not held out long, and it is thought the citadel will also fall : it next remains to be seen what the enemy will do. The scarcity of money and corn disables Marshal de Villars from attempting what

courage and despair might suggest to him. There was a great outcry against peace; but perhaps it will now be necessary to conclude it on more unfavourable conditions than those which were offered before. I think we shall soon have the ambassador here; he will find our affairs in a much worse situation than your own. M. Voisin and M. Desmaretz do their utmost, but their predecessor ruined everything in the hope of making peace. There is something incomprehensible respecting corn; it appears that there is plenty of it in Paris, and yet bread continues dear.

LETTER CXXX.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, August 10th, 1709.

I CAN easily conceive the Queen's grief upon the loss of her infant. Our two Princesses will always be esteemed and admired by the worthy, which is a great source of happiness, but I could wish them many others. I will not dispute with you which is the happiest; if I knew yours as well as our own, I should decide the point by their respective dispositions. The Duchess of Burgundy makes but little use of her freedom, and the pleasures of our court; she is absorbed

in affliction, endeavours to amuse herself, but without success; her colds, pregnancy, and the indolence of all the young females who surround her, prevent her from enjoying the pleasures of the finest garden in the world; she has not much taste for music; play becomes insipid, because money has almost disappeared; her principal object is news, and none arrives of an agreeable nature. The Queen has not been accustomed to the pleasures of the country; she is adored by the King her husband; she possesses in you, Madam, a treasure, which were she to lose, would render her inconsolable. You know what our King thinks on this subject; you must remain where you are as long as your presence does not become detrimental; everything must be sacrificed in case you should become too much suspected.

You speak to me of a good defence at Tournay, and it is twelve days since the place surrendered; it is affirmed that the citadel will hold out during this month. Marshal de Villars is not in a condition to attempt anything; his troops are very inferior to those of the enemy, and diminish every day by desertion and hunger. I think that the article of corn will turn my brain; more is to be seen in the market than ever, and yet the price of bread rises! We are assured from all quarters, that we shall experience great relief from the abundance of barley, though it is already at a high price. As to money, it is more than ever concealed; everybody

agrees that there is more in the kingdom than before the war, but it no longer circulates; and you know that when the blood stops, death ensues.

M. Chamillard, persuaded that peace was near at hand, forced public credit so much, that he absolutely destroyed it; M. Desmaretz restored it in the first five months of his administration; the capture of Lisle weakened it a little, but the loss of Ghent and separation of our army destroyed it again; so that nothing but fortunate events or peace can revive it; the former are hopeless, and you do not wish for the latter.

Why do you accuse me of desiring the dethronement of their Catholic Majesties? I am very far from this thought, and few persons would make greater sacrifices than myself to see their reign consolidated; but it is true, that in order to accomplish it, I would not consent to the ruin of France. I admire your sentiments, but I was not prepared to expect what you have told me; could you possibly have the courage to quit the Queen so long as she is not compelled to take this step herself by the Spaniards? There would be great cruelty in abandoning her now. How sincerely do I pity you, Madam, and how truly unfortunate you are, notwithstanding your beauty and celebrity!

LETTER CXXI.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, August 18th, 1709.

You are at last convinced that we have reached a crisis; I may have been one of the first to apprehend it; at length, however, everybody can see it as well as myself; and I assure you that I am very much grieved to find but one opinion upon this subject. I even venture to say, that I should not want fortitude, if I saw any hope in the future. If we are ever so unfortunate as to see each other again, you will agree to all I shall have to communicate. You are in the right for saying that some persons thought all was lost before it really was so, but at length it has been effected in good earnest. Kings would be happy, if they could do everything themselves, but they are obliged to employ very imperfect instruments. I had three days ago a long conversation with the person from whom I forwarded to you a letter: he appears to have sought an interview with me only for the purpose of speaking of you, and I must do him the justice to say, that no man can be more alive to your interests; if he is equally so towards me, he will tell you that I have no occasion for excitement with regard to you, and

that nobody can persuade me that the smallest blame can be attached to you ; at least, it must be proved to me in a very satisfactory manner, which I think would not be an easy matter.

You will, doubtless, have heard of the proposal of Prince Eugene for a truce, respecting the citadel of Tournay ; and who, highly displeased at its not being accepted, threatens so loudly that he well deserves to be confounded. Marshal de Villars does all he can, but he is greatly straitened for want of provisions, which are obtained with great difficulty. The Duchess of Mantua has had an interview at my house with the King and the Duchess of Burgundy ; I could perceive no alteration in her ; our Princess manifested great kindness towards her, and kept her as long as she could : she conducts herself with great propriety, and there is need of it, for slander would be glad to fix its fangs upon her ; you know how much the Lorraine Princes are exposed to it ; she possesses, moreover, a rank, youth, and beauty that excites envy ; she is without wealth or credit ; all these are quite enough to excite the malignity of the world. But till now she has not given occasion to it : her polished manners are regarded as insipid at our court, where, under the guise of freedom and candour, the most intolerable vulgarity has taken root.

Versailles, August 19th, 1709.

I did not close my letter, in the hope of hearing some news on coming here: I now learn that the citadel of Tournay defends itself in a manner which baffles the enemy, but the want of subsistence will ruin us everywhere.

The Duke de Noailles had formed a project, which might have been executed, had the inferior officers been as vigilant as himself; he is much hurt, as I also am, that he has succeeded only in the minor part of what he had undertaken.

LETTER CXXXII.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, August 26th, 1709.

WE thought here, like you, that the siege of Tournay would have been advantageous to us, and that it would be still more so, if it occupied the enemy to the end of September: but I fear the want of subsistence everywhere, caused by the scarcity of money and corn. The news we have from the citadel, of the excellent positions taken by Marshal de Villars, and of the little anxiety felt by the Marshal de Berwick, is in perfect unison with what you tell me. Marshal d'Harcourt, is not quite easy in his position; it would seem that the Germans wish to

attempt something, which is not as yet very clearly ascertained.

It is certain that all our faults and misfortunes in the war would not be irretrievable, if we had money and corn. The people are always ripe for commotion : what has hitherto taken place in this respect has not been of much consequence ; but the greatest misfortunes have often had small beginnings.

It is true, Madam, that there is an outcry against you, but I so boldly rely on the force of truth, that I do not doubt of its ultimate triumph, nor that the King thinks otherwise than you could wish, and he sometimes expresses himself to this effect : as to myself, I am so devoted to you, that I will hear nothing but what is good of you ; and I can assure you that the Prince, who shall be nameless on this occasion, has never spoken to me otherwise.

We are at Marly, where all the royal family is in good health ; the subject of conversation is oftener upon the dearness of bread, wheat, and barley, than dress and pleasures ; we have, however, a supply of pretty women, of which the court stood in need ; their names are as follow : Madame de Lambescq, daughter of the Duchess of Duras, and wife of the son of Count de Brionne ; the Marchioness de Nelle, daughter of M. de la Meilleraye ; Madame de Tonnerre, daughter of Madame de Blansac ; Madame de Polignac, daughter of Madame de Mailly, and

Madame de Courcillon, whom I need not describe to you: the oldest of these five ladies is but seventeen.

LETTER CXXXIII.

TO THE SAME.

Versailles, September 2nd, 1709.

I LEARNT nothing on my arrival here yesterday from Saint Cyr, but the departure of Marshal de Boufflers, to be near the army in case anything happens to Marshal de Villars.

The wheat harvest is abundant, and bread is still rising—there is something incomprehensible in all this.

LETTER CXXXIV.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, September 8th, 1709.

I HAVE been greatly alarmed, on hearing from the letter with which the Queen has honoured me, that your departure is spoken of, and according to my usual custom, I have already fancied you far from Madrid. You well know what I think on this point, and the cruelty which I conceive there is in leaving their Majesties so long as they

wished to retain you; if this separation was necessary for their own good, they are reasonable enough to consent to it; besides, they have too much firmness not to do a violence to their own feelings, should it be necessary. I do not know why the Queen orders me to solicit most ardently for your remaining with her; for if I know all that passes on that subject, it seems to me that you are entirely your own mistress, and that you have only to account to their Catholic Majesties.

I should be much surprised, and very glad, if our courier brought the news which you announce to me, as it would be really a miracle; God displays them on great emergencies, and we are certainly reduced to a sad predicament by the scarcity of corn and money. If you were an eye witness of the misery of your country, I am sure you would be afflicted; as for myself, I am overwhelmed: it is shocking to see people wanting bread without possessing the means to relieve them. This is not my only grief: the capture of the citadel of Tournay enables the enemy to do what he pleases; you may conceive that I already see him in France, after having defeated Marshal de Villars. Marshal de Boufflers, of whose departure for the army I have before informed you, declared on his arrival, that he would serve as a volunteer, and obey the orders of Marshal de Villars in every respect; he is so sincere, that there is no doubt of his acting up to what he has promised. Marshal de Villars is delighted with

him, and sends word that if the officers do not recover their animation by this example, they must have lost all spirit. The part that he is going to act is so little understood, that everybody would have it he had gone to treat of peace; this news has probably reached you. Marshal de Villars is exasperated at M. de Surville for not having sent a sufficient supply of ammunition into the citadel, and which is the cause of its loss: it is affirmed that it would have held out a long time, and that the enemy proceeded against it very feebly, through their dread of the mines; perhaps they were aware also that the garrison wanted provisions, and therefore wished to preserve the lives of their soldiers.

The enemy marched off as soon as they were masters of the citadel, and yesterday evening their intentions were not yet known. M. Voisin expected a courier: I tremble at the arrival of one, and I am greatly alarmed on these occasions for the Duchess of Burgundy.

Versailles, September 9th, 1709.

ON reaching this place yesterday, I found your letter of the 30th ultimo, and another from the Queen; they both relate to your intention of retiring; the Queen orders me so earnestly to make pressing solicitations to the King, that I though you had received something on the subject from hence of which I was ignorant; but his Majesty assured me, on the contrary, that he

had not changed his sentiments, and that their Catholic Majesties are at full liberty to act as they please. I have ventured to recommend their consulting you ; nobody can think more correctly than yourself, and they ought to believe you, since your mind and heart are equally good. You will not have the cruelty to leave the Queen, unless you judge it absolutely necessary for her personal interests. That of the Prince of Asturias appears to me very pressing, and if you quit him, I think that fidelity ought to be the principal quality of the governess which you will procure him. It would be better to endure every inconvenience than expose this precious pledge.

You are right in sparing me the recital of what has passed between the Queen and yourself, after having opened your mind to her ; I am ingenious enough in tormenting myself by fancying it more than once, for I do not wait for misfortunes to take place before I am afflicted by them. I thought yesterday evening that the King was going to inform me of the means to be devised for obtaining money, but I saw that he knew nothing on the subject, and that it is from M. de Villeroi I am to hear what you call a miracle ; we shall have great occasion for it in more quarters than one, for we are reduced to great extremities. Moreover, I do not see that much dependence can be placed upon the Jew's negotiations. God grant that we may deceive ourselves ! I have but too much reason to know that

those who have been in the habit of predicting the worst during the last two or three years, are fully justified by events.

The news of yesterday evening leaves little doubt of an action having taken place in Flanders; public and individual anxiety is therefore at its height.

LETTER CXXXV.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, September 14th, 1709.

I RECEIVED with much pain the angry and violent letter which you wrote to me on the 1st instant; I went immediately to M. Voisin to ascertain what orders had been given to M. de Besons; he told me that they were, to conduct himself with propriety, not to run any unnecessary risks; in a word, such as are always given to the generals, and which conclude by leaving it to them who are on the spot to decide as to the best mode of proceeding. I am much afflicted at what has passed upon this occasion, which would not have been perhaps as fortunate as you imagine; we have reason to think that we should have brought misfortune upon you, and perhaps you will do better when you are without us.

At length this battle in Flanders, so much desired in Spain, and feared in France, took place on the 11th instant. Marshal de Boufflers

calls it glorious and unfortunate, for we have lost it, notwithstanding the valour of our troops, not one of whom deserted the ranks, neither in the action nor during the retreat. The enemy, as brave as ourselves, remained masters of the field of battle owing to their numbers, which were superior to ours, as I have always informed you. Our misfortune has made us almost overlook the glory of Marshal de Villars, who was dangerously wounded, and whom I fear we may lose. After his fine retreat, Marshal de Boufflers retired to Quesnoi: the loss of the enemy and our own is not yet ascertained, but it is thought to be very great on both sides, for never was there more fury displayed, and our troops called out to be led against the enemy, when they were ordered to retreat. Nothing can equal the exertions of Marshal de Boufflers; it is a great pity that he is sixty-six years old, and that Marshal de Villars is dying. Our Princess is very much afflicted, and you would have been deeply affected on seeing her, surrounded by her ladies, crying out for their husbands and children. The Duke de Guiche was wounded during the cannonade; the Duchess, his wife, set out as soon as she heard it; she had two children besides her husband in the battle; one is safe, the other I know nothing about: the Duke's wound is slight. The Marquis de Coetquin was wounded by the same discharge, and has had his leg amputated; his mother went to see him where he lay with the

rest of the wounded. Madame d'Angeau's son has had his thigh amputated ; his mother has been to Quesnoi, the wife of Marshal Villars has also gone there. M. de Palaviûni, and M. de Chémerant were among the killed. Albergotti is wounded, the Duke de Saint Aignan has also received a wound in the head. M. d'Artaignan greatly signalised himself, and had three horses killed under him : I shall find more subjects of sadness before closing my letter. I have not a doubt but you will remain with the Queen in the present conjuncture, and I do not comprehend how you can leave her till she freely consents to it. The Duchess of Burgundy and myself often picture to ourselves the situation in which you are, and all that you have to fear ; it affects her nerves much : the youth of these two Princesses is passed in great sorrow. The hopes of peace with the Duke of Savoy are very slight, and it is but little calculated on here ; nothing, however, but peace will do for us ; the famine increases daily ; we begin to unravel the mystery of the quantity of corn and the dearness of bread : it is because money is scarce, so that we shall all die of hunger this winter, if the sea is not open to bring us corn ; this is the only means of lowering the price of what we have, and of restoring abundance ; we are almost without a sufficiency for sowing, and if this misfortune happens, famine may perpetuate itself for several years. God declares himself so visibly, that it

would be resisting him not to wish for peace, and you know better than I can, that the safety of the people is the first duty of the King. I do not like to oppose your sentiments, though still less to conceal my own from you.

A quarter of an hour after the arrival of the courier who announced to us the loss of the battle of Flanders, there came another from the Duke de Noailles, bringing us an account of the brilliant affair which he has had in Catalonia; we were insensible to this piece of good fortune, but the Marshal's conduct has not been the less applauded. The King of England was at Douay, ill of a fever; but when he learnt that there was a probability of a battle, he joined the army and performed wonders.

September 15th.

I heard nothing very certain yesterday evening. A courier is expected to-day from Marshal de Boufflers, and as my letter will not be despatched before to-morrow, I shall add whatever I may hear. M. Voisin has received a long letter from Marshal de Villars, signed by himself, and displaying great composure of mind; but he has so much strength of mind, that I by no means flatter myself from this circumstance with a hope of his ultimate recovery.

16th.

The more one enters into the details of the action which took place on the 11th instant, the less can be said as to who had the advantage: the

enemy remained masters of the field, and our army retired; they acknowledge a loss of nearly twenty thousand men; they had ten lieutenant generals killed. M. de Nangis is expected this evening with the particulars, and fifty standards. It is thought we had eight thousand men killed or wounded.

LETTER CXXXVI.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, October 20th, 1709.

WOULD to God that I may be deceived, as you say at the conclusion of your letter of the 8th inst., and that Spain might be preserved for Philip V. provided that France did not suffer too much from it! I have been so struck with this idea, that I could not help beginning my answer where you finished yours.

I own that I have foreseen all our misfortunes, and at length they are arrived. You triumph in the courage of Frenchmen, but these Frenchmen cannot advance a step for want of bread; and this disaster will prevent all that could have been done for the relief of Mons. I fear lest the loss of this fortress is not all we have to apprehend, and that the fine weather will facilitate the siege of Maubeuge, which, it is said, the enemy wishes to undertake; after that, France may be entered,

and you will not allow any one to complain! Do you think that such events are calculated to make money circulate?—but I refer you for our situation to M. Amelot, who appeared very much surprised and afflicted during the visit he paid me. He has been here several different times lately, and I could not see him, having had the fever for nearly six weeks, with acute pains; but I have been better during the last two days.

As to the conversation of our courtiers, it is still worse than you are told; they decry our affairs even more than our enemies. You are in the right to enjoy retirement; without that which I find here I could not bear Versailles.

M. de Noailles has accompanied his project with a memorial of what was absolutely requisite for him, and which cannot be supplied. You should judge of the magazines we have in that quarter from those which we have in Flanders. Marshal de Berwick remained here only one night, and is gone into Flanders; the bad health of Marshal de Boufflers, joined to his zeal, makes one anxious that he should receive every kind of succour.

The King is perfectly satisfied with all that Marshal de Berwick has done in Dauphiny. I was surprised at the offer which has been made of the Order of the Golden Fleece to a certain person: it seems that the King does not wish it to be accepted. Nobody here doubts but that the Spaniards will call for the Archduke when they

see the King abandoned by France. My esteem for the nation prevents me from fancying them capable of treason towards a King whom they appear to love and esteem ; and my ideas on this point are closely in unison with those of the Duchess of Burgundy. Grant that she may never be able to take up my defence with you ! I feel for you, Madam, more than I can describe. I think I suffer much, but I am convinced you suffer more.

LETTER CXXXVII.

TO THE SAME.

Versailles, October 27th, 1709.

I HAD not the honour of answering the Queen relative to your leaving Spain,—because I will now explain myself with you at greater length and freedom on that subject.

I see nothing in the letters of M. de Bergheitz which intimates that indirect methods are adopted to make you comprehend what is desired of you ; it appears to me, that he explains himself very clearly : he seems to be persuaded that the King of Spain should send away all the French ; he gives his advice with frankness ; he does the same with regard to you ; and all this seems to be very proper. The strongest passage is where he says,

“ It is the opinion of his Majesty and all the principal individuals of the court who have spoken to me.” It is very possible that the King may have said to M. de Bergheitz, in some conversation upon these subjects, that he thought nearly as he did ; it may also be very probable that one of our ministers may have confirmed M. de Bergheitz in the opinion which he entertains that you ought to leave Spain ; but that it is the King’s wish, or an intimation on his part, is what I cannot believe, and the motives for which would be altogether incomprehensible. I persist, therefore, in believing, that the King approves of your continuing with their Catholic Majesties as long as they wish it, and that, if he thought otherwise, he would cause it to be frankly stated. This is my opinion, which I do not vouch for as being either reasonable or well founded ; I may be easily deceived, but I will never knowingly deceive. There is no subterfuge in my conversation, nor more meant than what is expressed. I am an individual of little importance : I write to you with the greatest candour, never shewing my letters nor your answers ; I have no authority from any quarter ; I am ignorant of public affairs, it is not wished that I should meddle with them, and I will abstain. There is no concealment attempted upon me, but I know nothing in time, and I am very often ill informed. If the King wished you to quit the Queen of Spain, he would mention it to his council ; M. de Torcy would write to you

about it, and this order would not pass through my hands. Do not therefore attach much importance to what I say. Pity me as much as I do you, and believe that nothing afflicts me more than the melancholy situation of their Catholic Majesties; if you will not give me credit as to our own condition, believe M. Amelot, or the Marshal de Villeroi; they possess your confidence, and they deserve it. You would be very unjust if you wished me to continue enquiring after Spanish affairs, when you and M. Amelot have abandoned them. It seems to me that you strictly follow the counsels of M. de Bergheitz, and that your separation from France is pushed even to animosity; I shall always respect your merit and your misfortunes, and nothing can ever turn me against you.

Your project of retiring to Pau is very dismal; I will not mention it to the King; it will be time enough to do so when you are out of Spain, if that should take place. I do not think myself alone in attaching importance to your character; the figure which you will make at Pau will be entirely inconsistent with it, and I assure you, that this idea distresses me extremely. Once more, Madam, only weigh well all I say to you as coming from a sincere friend, captivated with your merit, and who will bear witness to the last, that you have for four years conducted yourself in as able and correct a manner as could be desired. I can take upon me no responsibility. I know

the injustice of mankind and the cabal which appears to exist against you. All this would be trifling if their Catholic Majesties could continue where they are. You are very good in saying a word about the devout Bishop whom I have lost; the project you contemplate, and which you conceal from me, will make you perhaps one day feel how great a treasure it is to have a faithful friend to aid you in the only pursuit worthy of your attention in this life. All our wounded are going on well now; they have caused us great uneasiness. The Duke de Guiche has arrived at Paris; Marshal de Villars is expected in the beginning of November; I could wish him at Versailles, in order to have the advice of Mareschal: such a man is worth preserving.

LETTER CXXXVIII.

TO THE SAME.

Marly, November 4th, 1709.

As the King of Spain has proposed to his council what he wished to do for M. Amelot, our King having communicated what was required to his advisers, it is there that the exclusion has arisen. All has fallen upon the ambassador; it does not occur to me that anything has been said about you. In other respects I do

not presume to defend what has passed upon that subject. I know not how to speak against what I think, and what I think ought not to be spoken. I wish sincerely that what you have written to me may have been some solace to you; and although I am overwhelmed with troubles, I would take your griefs also, were it possible; I am accustomed to live upon poison. You are not so circumstanced; your presence is necessary to their Catholic Majesties, and I am no longer of use here. I fear very much lest the rest of your life may be embittered; every thing seems to contribute to it; but you have a happy disposition, fortitude, an elevated mind, and a secret project, which, if I mistake not, transcends all these qualities: it is not therefore too much, from all these combined, to imagine you may yet live in society, and with the great, to share their afflictions, to endure their persecutions, consider your own troubles as light in comparison with what you feel on their account, and bear it with cheerfulness to the hour of dissolution. How unhappy are those who do not look forward to an eternal reward! You unbosom yourself to me,—I do the same. I should very much fear, for more than one reason, to be with you again in the dark room, where you bore the fever with so much gentleness and patience; but you know greater evils that must be patiently endured.

No, Madam, Mons has not been relieved, and

whatever loss the enemy may have sustained, we are still worse off than they are, and the want of money and bread were obstacles to the movements which our army might have made. We are at this moment a little better off respecting corn; some importations have taken place from abroad, and bread has fallen the two last market-days.

We expect the Elector of Bavaria here on Thursday: he wished to see the King incognito, merely for a moment; this was his first idea, but a hunting party is now proposed, and a little play in the saloon. Versailles must be seen; all this will absorb time; the Dauphin wants him to see Meuden; he is to return by Chantilly. Our wounded are on their return. Plans are already formed here to sow dissensions among our generals during the winter. The conversation of the court ladies is but too well calculated to produce this effect.

LETTER CXXXIX.

TO THE SAME.

Versailles, November 17th, 1709.

Mons has not been relieved, because the want of bread impeded the march of the troops that it

was necessary to make in order to harrass the enemy; this is what is said, and I repeat it to you like a parrot, without understanding it.

Marshal de Boufflers has returned more than satisfied with the bravery of the army: he even compares our soldiers to the Romans, and says that they will do wonders if properly led. It is not me, Madam, who has persuaded M. Amelot; it is because he sees the real state of our affairs, and possesses too much candour not to tell you the truth, though it should displease you. The zeal you have for their Catholic Majesties makes you forget your own country; and yet the state in which it now is would fill you with grief if you were nearer the scene of calamity. We are expecting the Duke de Noailles every moment: there is a total deficiency of all the means necessary for carrying his project into effect, and in consequence of this, he found it impossible to do what would have been extremely useful. Marshal de Villars is at Paris, and will be here in two days; there is reason to hope that he will be able to serve in the next campaign.

LETTER CXL.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, November 25th, 1709.

I do not know the meaning of all this, and whether it is an irony to tell me that I have explained to you the meaning of the letter of M. de Bergheitz. I have always told you my thoughts; I think you have nothing to do but to await the King's orders, who, till now, does not appear to wish to quit their Catholic Majesties. The return of M. Amelot, with which you so much reproach us, had been a long time solicited by himself. I feel great regret at not daring to show your letter; it is so much above my capacity, that I am very sorry it was only written for my own perusal, for I am convinced that your reasons would make a great impression.

You need not scold me any more about peace, it is out of the question, and war is only thought of; God grant that the means of continuing it may be as feasible as you think! I have only seen Marshal de Villars for a moment, he said, "We must have peace, madam, if possible, cost what it will: but if our enemies refuse it, we must continue the war as well as we can, and I am

ready to devote my life and exertions to the king's service." I have already told you, that M. Desmaretz has seen and examined the memorial which has passed through the hands of M. de Villeroi; it is full of sound reasoning and comprehensive views, but the minister says that it turns upon a false principle, and that there is not at present five hundred individuals in France who could lend the King the sum mentioned in it.

The truth is, that the government of a great kingdom is not to be changed from one day to another: a financial measure cannot be adopted without the comptroller-general, and he cannot act without being convinced of its success; it is very difficult to adopt other expedients. I have seen well informed men, who are convinced that the troops ought to be withdrawn from Spain, in order to show the enemy that we are sincerely desirous of peace. I have heard it maintained by others, that the troops should not be withdrawn from Spain, but on signing the treaty. I have heard a man of great judgment say, that the most important service which could be rendered to the King of Spain, would be to withdraw the French troops, as the only means of attaching the Spaniards to their King, and that an union between the two nations should never have been attempted; conceive the effect of such a diversity of opinions upon the mind of one who had passed

her sixtieth year, when she began to hear public affairs discussed.

I admit the possibility of all the miracles mentioned in your letter, and that but for the famine we might still expect a more fortunate campaign. Preparations are making for it, as much as the scarcity of money and corn will permit, and I shall always await with confidence some miracle in favour of Spain; if meritorious actions could deserve any thing at the hands of God, I should say that the innocence and virtue of the King and Queen merit a recompense. I dare not risk showing your letters; they do not like here that women should talk of public affairs, and if I cannot serve you as much as I could wish, I must at least endeavour not to render you a disservice.

How can you say that God is not against us when he visits us with a winter unexampled for a hundred and five years, which freezes all the corn and the vines, that spares no fruit, and kills all the trees! the olive trees of Provence and Languedoc, the chesnut trees of Limousin, and the walnut trees throughout France, are ruined for many years to come; we see the poor dying with hunger, without being able to relieve them, because our lands are no longer productive, and the charities of the King are no longer distributed: such, Madam, is our present situation.

LETTER CXLI.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, January 25th, 1710.

MARSHAL DE VILLARS causes himself to be carried everywhere; he had yesterday evening a tête-à-tête of two hours with the King at my house. The courtiers will know more exactly than myself the length of his visit, for they have the boldness to envy the marks of esteem which are bestowed upon a man who is deserving of them.

The more the last battle is understood, the more it becomes evident that Heaven is against us; we can scarcely doubt but that it would have been won, if Marshal de Villars had not been wounded, and that the army would have been lost without the fine retreat of Marshal de Boufflers.

It is true that I have abstained from touching upon Spanish affairs, since you have set me the example, and M. Amelot is returned. I had only attended to them for the purpose of witnessing your conduct to each other: after the orders which you received from the King in my room, I have cause to fear, lest you should be treated with as much rudeness as you had been before that time; but as I have already said, the people here cannot bear that women should meddle with

public affairs, and no zeal or attachment can justify them: but I am not less interested for the health of the King and Queen; I ardently wish them to remain upon the throne of Spain on any conditions, and that we may have a very disadvantageous peace, not to call it disgraceful, (for I cannot admit that,) when we yield to the necessity which famine has reduced us to sacrificing our glory and predilection for the safety of the people, who are perishing with hunger, and ready to revolt through despair.

I do not know M. de Isberville, nor precisely to what his mission related; but I know that from his first despatches he wrote wonders about the King of Spain, and as to the Queen every body is agreed on her merits.

LETTER CXLII.

TO THE SAME.

Versailles, February 3rd, 1710.

I THINK that you are in an illusion respecting the situation of the Archduke. Grant, however, that you may be more correct than myself! It is an undisputed truth that all those who are attached to our two Kings are greatly to be pitied; I cannot believe that their hearts will ever be disunited.

You know that I am a great admirer of M. de Bergheitz, nevertheless I can scarcely comprehend his eagerness to get you out of Spain. You have no occasion for all your eloquence, to prove to me that you have fulfilled your duties towards the two Kings whom you have served; I have been partly a witness, and I can judge of the rest. I have nothing new to mention upon that subject; the King has not changed his opinions; he leaves you to be the mistress of your conduct, and you will act just as you please; but depend upon it, that you are very much mistaken when you think we complain too much: we may have been premature in our complaints, but we are now at the last extremity.

All Paris hopes and looks for peace, because the negotiators are named: but I see nothing yet which can flatter our hopes, except that we are so reduced as to be forced to wish for peace upon any terms.

LETTER CXLIII.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, February 16th, 1710.

WE get accustomed to everything, since we can habituate ourselves to sadness; I am in this mood at present; I look forward to no more joy,

and do not even aspire to it ; I feel, however, a little more confidence, that God will not overthrow the greatest monarchies of Europe.

You know that I have always hoped for some miracle in favour of their Catholic Majesties. I think them so agreeable to God, that I cannot conceive he will abandon them. From the account which M. d'Isberville has rendered to the King, your affairs are in a better condition than our own ; it is some time since I told you that I was less afflicted at the state of affairs than the disposition of the public mind. I have seen only despair, murmurs, exaggerated complaints and discouragement. I am not surprised that accounts are sent to Madrid, that our generals will not serve, since they wish to persuade us of it here, notwithstanding all that the doctors, the surgeons, and they themselves say. Marshal d'Harcourt is at Bourbon ; the journey alone has been of service to him ; I hope much from the waters ; he is rather afflicted with fits of melancholy, which gives me the greatest cause of uneasiness on his account. Marshal de Villars is gay, lively, full of spirits, and in very good health, causing himself to be carried everywhere ; his wound will close very soon.

The King of England came here yesterday with the Princess, to pay a visit to our King and the court, upon the birth of the Duke d'Anjou : he also saw Marshal de Villars. The Queen did not

come : she has the fever almost continually ; I should think she would sink under it, were it not for my own experience that it may be supported for many years, even in a more advanced age than that of the Queen ; every one dies when it pleases God ; I see no other rule by which we depart this life. I am afflicted at not being able to render any service to this great Queen, whose situation is more entitled to pity than I can describe to you.

LETTER CXLIV.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, March 4th, 1710.

YES, Madam, I take the part of praying to God for the success of the armies of our Kings, and of leaving to politicians the care of discovering where our true interests lay.

You know that I have had a great confidence in the virtue of their Catholic Majesties, and I still indulge the hope that miracles will come to their aid. It is true that what has lately taken place at Madrid is a great proof of the protection of God. Nothing else was spoken of yesterday at Marly, and we are impatient to know whether many people have been found in the confidence of the Duke de Medina Cœli. The answer of

the Duke of Ossune gives us a great idea of his merit, and of the goodness of the King, whose conduct in the whole affair has been admirable.

I have too often fancied to myself your farewell visit to the Queen, not to have afforded me the pleasure I derive from the idea of your return into her presence. Does Spanish gravity already prevent the Prince of Asturias from embracing? for I am not very well satisfied at his having only given you his hand to kiss; but it is right to conform to the customs of other countries; and I do not admire ours sufficiently, to wish that all the world should imitate them.

I no longer feel the languishing state of my health—more important objects occupy me. Douay is besieged, and may be taken before our army is in the field; when that takes place, they talk of fighting a great battle. Our enemies are superior, and puffed up with their victories: Prince Eugene and M. de Marlborough ride about upon their borrowed horses: all this might sadden a person more inclined to joy than I have been for several years.

LETTER CXLV.

TO THE SAME.

Saint-Cyr, March 17th, 1710.

I RECEIVED, the day before yesterday, your two letters, one dated the 24th ult. and the other the 4th instant, both convincing me of your resolution to quit Spain. You will see that the King will not approve of it, and that I had been better informed than M. de Bergheitz, when I assured you that he did not desire it, and that he should leave you to act as you please, after you have consulted the opinion of the King and Queen, as to whether your separation was necessary.

If I do not give you my advice, it is because I can give you none that is good, and because I am convinced your own ideas are more correct than mine; the state of our affairs is also such as to baffle every project that is formed. Such are my reasons; you do not appear disposed to attach much credit to them, but they are not the less sincere, and you can never alienate me from you.

The project of Pau appeared to me very rational and dignified: I do not know your motives for allowing yourself to be led by M. de Berg-

heitz, who wishes to remove you so far from their Catholic Majesties, that you may never rejoin them; scarcely any case of difficulty has, however, occurred, in which you have not afforded great consolation to them.

I am not born for the transports of joy to which you allude; I am very glad to see the Duchess of Burgundy has two sons, and that she has been extricated from a most unpleasant accouchement; but I am not transported to see a Duke of Anjou; I am still less so on seeing plenipotentiaries in Flanders, who can only make a bad peace or an unfortunate war. Everybody at Versailles are of the same opinion as myself upon this subject, so that there is no probability of my letters becoming very amusing; such as they are, you shall have as many as you please: and as for myself I prefer receiving your letters, though they should be somewhat barren, than not hearing at all.

How can you wish the King to signify to you what you have to do on quitting Spain, when you leave it without his permission, or without telling him the reasons which determine you to take this step? I am not surprised at the King and Queen being affected at your departure; they will feel still more sensibly the happiness of having possessed you, when they shall have lost you; if the Prince of Asturias were older he would be very much afflicted by it.

I have sent your letter to Marshal de Villeroi; he wished to see me before I answered it, and proposed that I should stop the courier, but I do not feel myself of sufficient importance to adopt this step. I am under considerable obligations to the Cardinal de la Tremoille; he has taken great pains for the Bishop of Chartres: our affairs meet with difficulties at Rome, as well as elsewhere: he has surmounted everything, and obtained concessions which could not have been expected in times like these.

LETTER CXLVI.

TO THE SAME.

Versailles, April 7th, 1710.

I do not know what our real interests should make you wish for, as to the success of the campaign which his Catholic Majesty is about to commence; but I have read with great pleasure the detail of the arrangement that has been made, and the hopes that you conceive of it.

There is nobody here who speaks well of our affairs, and our enemies continue to decry them less than ourselves; it is still affirmed that Marshal d'Harcourt will not serve: in the mean

time he has sent to the King, to say that he intends to take the waters, and repose himself till it is time for him to proceed to Germany, and that he will then repair to the army without coming here. The same courtiers affirm that Marshal de Villars will not serve: he has gone to Paris for the purpose of entering the parliament; from thence he proceeds to Villars, where he will try to mount on horseback; he strongly maintains that he will be able to head the army towards the end of May. It is true that the enemy are sufficiently active to make us fear they may do many things before that time.

LETTER CXLVII.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, May, 17th 1710.

I HAVE great difficulty in believing that your presence in Spain can do harm, and that your absence could be advantageous to the affairs of their Catholic Majesties; I was delighted when I saw that Providence arranged it otherwise, and I heartily wish you may never quit the Queen. I could not peruse what you wrote to me respecting this separation without the greatest emotion; I always hoped that so much virtue would not

go unrewarded, and I doubt not but the Queen will obtain absolution for her too great attachment to the Prince of Asturias. I think the Marquis de Cailus very fortunate, and that he has profited by his disgrace; I am very glad that he serves with the Marquis de Bay, who appears to be an able officer. You may easily conceive that I shall not fail to show this passage of your letter to Madame de Cailus, who stands very high at court; although a little too fat, she is as pretty as ever. It is true that the Duke of Savoy no longer makes any noise, nor is there anything more said of his devotion. But apropos of devotion, we have a devotee at court who is beginning to assume that character, though there has been a wish to conceal it; I allude to the Princess de Conti, who from present appearances will no longer deny it.

The King of England has left St. Germain in very good spirits, but in an indifferent state of health; the Queen, his mother, and the Princess, are going to Chaillot to-day, to remain there two months. Though permanently stationed in France, Marshal de Berwick will set out for Flanders, in case there should be any probability of a battle there; if not, he will return to Dauphiny. The siege of Douay continues; there is a great desire to relieve it, if the garrison can hold out till our army takes the field.

We shall have Madame de Vendome here to-

morrow: she comes to pay her respects to the King; the marriage took place at Sceaux, where many particulars have transpired of the slovenliness of M. de Vendome, of his astonishment at having put on two clean shirts in one day, and of his embarrassment at having some point lace on the breast of that which was given him to put on at night. It is said his wife is very neat in her person; I know not whether this is done for the purpose of improving these stories by contrast.

Should it please Heaven not to overwhelm you this summer, it appears to me that we might render you some assistance towards the end of the campaign; but this is only the offspring of my own brain, and deserves little attention. Our plenipotentiaries neither return or do any thing. All nations, friends and enemies, willingly hope for peace, although there is no longer any appearance of its taking place.

LETTER CXLVIII.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, May 25th, 1710.

You are right to be anxious respecting the siege of Douay, which is sure of being captured, and the result must be very disastrous. The

army of the enemy increases every day by the troops which join it from all quarters, and their entrenchments before Douay are as strong as if we had the superiority. Marshal de Villars does his best; but we hear from his attendants that he suffers much when he gets on horseback. Marshal de Berwick has gone into Flanders to command a wing of the army, in the event of a battle taking place, and about which everybody is so anxious; this is indeed a point of great importance. Our Duke de Noailles is gone; he will have so few troops that it is not likely he can do much; in this hopeless case, he would have gone to Flanders.

It is certain that your affairs are in every respect much better than ours; there have been so many disastrous incidents, that I should despair if I did not recognise the hand of that power who wishes to punish France. You will scarcely believe that it is I who console the Duchess of Burgundy, and that her uneasiness is greater than mine. Her husband has made strong representations to the King, for permission to go into Flanders, but in vain; the King does not think it proper to incur fresh risks. What will you say of Cardinal de Bouillon's having passed over to the enemy and written to the King, sending him back the order of the Holy Ghost, which he always wore concealed on his person through respect for the oath which he had taken; that he

resumes his quality of prince and sovereign ; that God only is his superior, and that he is going to assume the highest dignity after that of the Divinity ? If I do not express myself very clearly, I assure you that he is still more ambiguous, and that I have not seen a more nefarious communication under all the circumstances of our situation : his family is greatly to be pitied, but it does not appear disposed to take any part in his folly.

M. de Vendome is very well satisfied with his marriage ; he is delighted with his wife's cleverness, and consults her in all his affairs ; he has settled the whole of her own property upon her by the marriage contract. The Duke intends to be more assiduous at court, and wishes that Madame de Vendome should always be there. I have all this from the Princess herself, who appears to entertain a warm friendship towards you.

LETTER CXLIX.

TO THE SAME.

Marly, June 2nd, 1710.

THERE will be no battle, Madam, to save Douay : the want of money, which is our ruin, has prevented us from assembling the army soon

enough ; the enemy has had time to intrench himself, and as the military say, it would be to break our heads against stone walls to attack them, posted as they are. You may readily conceive where all this will lead ; the consequences of the war are terrible—the conditions of peace are frightful : we must be silent and invoke heaven. It is true that the affairs of Spain appear to be somewhat better, and we cannot too much admire the conduct of their Catholic Majesties ; but they are not happy in our present condition, in which they participate in more than one respect. It is, however, impossible to discuss this matter, much less foresee where the grand drama will end.

LETTER CL.

TO THE SAME.

Versailles, June 9th, 1710.

You accused me of viewing affairs too much on their gloomy side, and yet everybody is now of my opinion. I am pretty well satisfied with my own fortitude : and as there is scarcely anything new to me, I am not surprised at what happens every day. I foresaw that Douay would fall as soon as it was attacked by a powerful army, which was in every respect provided

with the means of succeeding, whilst ours could not take the field for want of money and subsistence; but at last it has assembled, and is in excellent condition; wants nothing, and displays the best spirit. It is very inferior to that of the enemy, which is entrenched with as much precaution as if they feared us as much as we fear them. M. d'Albergoti makes a brave defence. The Marshals de Villars, Berwick, and de Montesquieu, have tried every means, without finding an opening by which they can throw in succours; and they are all of the same opinion, though different as to their tempers. Marshal de Berwick is going into Dauphiny, where the campaign is about to open. It is said that the Duke of Savoy will command this year.

We are going to have a wedding, Madam,—a very important one; it will be celebrated without joy or expense. The Prince and Princess will remain as they are, without dowries or a home. One maid of honour and one of the bedchamber will compose the suite of the Duchess de Berri. Everything else is suspended till peace,—this frightful peace,—this peace, more afflicting than war, and which I have for a long time told you I should see without consolation.

I am perfectly aware that the situation in which the Duke de Noailles finds himself, gives a great superiority to the Archduke, and baffles the projects of his Catholic Majesty. God alone

knows how all this will end. Happy are those who quit the scene before this denouement, like the Duchess de la Vallière, who has at length terminated her penitence! The Princess de Conti, who saw her in her last moments, is greatly afflicted by this event.

LETTER CLI.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, June 15th, 1710.

You will have been informed that after having for six days endeavoured to find some feasible point by which the enemy might be attacked, our generals in Flanders concurred that it was impossible to relieve Douay. We shall therefore soon hear of the reduction of this place. M. d'Albergoti has made a most spirited defence. Grant that he may obtain such terms as will enable him to serve again! for he is one of the best officers the King has. After the capture of Douay we shall have fresh anxieties on account of this battle, which it is thought is indispensable to fight on the first enterprise which the enemy shall attempt. Marshal de Berwick is expected every day here on his way to Dauphiny. Marshal Villars is much inconvenienced whenever he mounts his horse, which he has occasion to do

very often, so that it is to be feared we shall lose the general. This would be a great misfortune.

God grant that your miquelets may continue in their present mood! I cannot help offering up prayers for you, although we have till now reason to believe that we cannot both prosper at the same time.

I had not heard that the disgrace of the Duke de Medina Cœli was laid to your account; but everybody thinks it strange that no cause for it has transpired. You had referred me to the King for information on this matter, but it appeared that he knew no more about it than myself. It is this mystery which excites such intense curiosity, and which gives rise to so many surmises as to the real cause.

LETTER CLII.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, June 22d, 1710.

THERE will be no battle, Madam, for the relief of Douay. All our generals have found it impossible to force the enemy's entrenchments; but when the place is taken, which cannot be far distant, our anxieties will return for the reasons which you mention.

It is true that the affairs of his Catholic Majesty appear to me at present in a favourable state ; but they cannot continue so when ours are so bad ; nor can they be retrieved without a miracle.

We have an army that wants for nothing, thanks to the great care of Desmaretz and M. de Voisin ; but it is weak, and the enemy is daily strengthening theirs.

Proceedings are instituted against Cardinal de Bouillon. He is at present in the enemy's army. There is great exasperation against him, and all his family ; but the King shews much kindness to the Duke de Bouillon.

LETTER CLIII.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, June 29th, 1710.

BUT for the postscript of your letter it would have reminded me of those romances which always break off in the most interesting place. I thought you unkind for announcing the probability of a battle of which we have been a long time expecting the issue ; but M. de Stharemburg did not wish for one, and I think we ought to rejoice at the circumstance, for we are out of the good graces of fortune. I am quite overjoyed

that the Queen has not been kept long in suspense. The siege of Douay has given us some repose, and even longer than we could have expected; but it is taken at last. M. d'Albergoti beat a parley when the King ordered him, and has obtained an honourable capitulation. As to the garrison, it performed wonders. The Duke de Mortemart greatly distinguished himself; M. de Ferrague has also acquired much honour. M. de Dreux, son-in-law of M. Chamillard, was wounded, but not dangerously. M. d'Albergoti held out three times longer than it was thought he could. Marshal Villars is endeavouring to cover Arras and Cambray, and to take a position where the enemy cannot attack him, without great disadvantage. They have lost many men before Douay; but they still continue superior in numbers. There is great desertion in our cavalry, though it is provided with everything.

The conclusion of the siege of Douay, and our anxiety as to what the enemy means to do, has thrown our Princess back into her former melancholy, of which she had been a little better for some days.

Grant that a Prince so worthy to reign, and subjects so affectionate, may never be separated! One cannot so well see how this wish is to be accomplished; but it is impossible to withhold it while we are waiting till Providence decides the question.

LETTER CLIV.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, July 6th, 1710.

It is said that the enemy intended marching yesterday, with a view of attacking our army. Others think that if they find us well entrenched, they may turn their attention to a siege, and we shall have everything to begin again. We think so differently upon public affairs that I do not like to write to you about them. You think that we do nothing of moment, and we really do a great deal, considering how we are situated on all sides. I am well convinced if you were here you would change your opinion. But the truth is, Madam, you are both French as well as Spanish, and on whatever side you turn yourself I do not think you are much at your ease.

The Duke de Noailles is in despair at not being able to do anything; his only object at present is to keep possession of the country which is under his protection, and this intention little suits a man of his enterprising spirit. He also is in want of subsistence for his very small army.

I do not doubt of the wonders which the King of Spain is likely to perform; but I am afraid they will be useless against a general who will

not show himself. The hot weather will set in; it will be necessary to take rest, and we shall thus be wasted by degrees on every side.

The defence of M. d'Albergoti is praised by every one; nor has it been thought sufficiently recompensed by the blue ribband, and the government of San-Louis.

The Queen of England did not choose to come to the wedding, nor to the supper; she prefers saying her prayers at Chaillot. The battle has given her much uneasiness about the King, her son, who is almost continually afflicted with a fever and bad health. To-morrow the Queen will come to Versailles, to visit those to whom she has been accustomed to pay this honour. The Duchess has not appeared, being yet in the first year of her mourning.

The campaign is as yet but little advanced, considering all we have to fear, and money becomes scarcer every day. But why should I trouble you with my complaints, when you are overwhelmed with your own, and have also to support your Queen? How cruel it would have been if you had left her!

LETTER CLV.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, August 3d, 1710.

PEACE is out of the question, and I hope you will scold me less for the future. War is seriously thought of; the King labours with M. Desmaretz and M. de Voisin, to ascertain the sum which the former can furnish, and the purposes to which the latter will appropriate it. He has resolved to curtail superfluous expences, and defer various payments, in order to devote all to the prosecution of the war. This occupation with the ministers will take place every week. We have learnt that the Duke of Savoy had received the sacrament, and it was intended to be concealed from the Duchess of Burgundy, but she is better informed than ourselves. Her mother wrote to her to say that it was the custom of Turin to receive the host on the second or third days of sickness; that they had brought it to his Royal Highness at three o'clock in the morning, which caused it to be rumoured everywhere that he was on the point of death; but it is only the young Prince who continues indisposed.

Marshal de Villars has made a movement, which was intended to induce the enemy to give

us battle, but they have cut ravines, and as the position our army has taken up is very good, it is going to entrench itself.

The English have landed twelve hundred men at Cette and Beziers. The Duke de Noailles having been informed of it, took upon himself, without any farther orders, to proceed to the point of attack without delay. The King is highly pleased with his zeal, and thinks this descent will be of no importance.

It seems to me that the Duke de Noailles has set out in the hope of having troops at the end of the campaign, to undertake the siege of Girona. Everything that has taken place since, should hasten the execution of this project. We must wait till the snows are upon the mountains of Dauphiny, for the enemy are very active, and show themselves in every direction. Marshal de Berwick does not as yet appear to have been much embarrassed.

August 4th.

Yesterday a courier brought us intelligence that the enemy had re-embarked at Cette. The Duke de Noailles had marched some troops there with incredible celerity. There are three or four hundred prisoners, besides many who were killed or drowned in the retreat. You may easily imagine that I am not insensible to this service, or to the fact of its having been rendered by the Duke de Noailles.

LETTER CLVI.

TO THE SAME.

Versailles, August 10th, 1710.

To all appearance we shall have no battle, as the enemy did not seek it in the last movement of Marshal Villars. It is said that Prince Eugene wished for one, but that it was opposed by the Dutch. It is out of my power, Madam, to give an opinion as to the union of the two monarchies. We have some very intelligent men here, who think it will never be suffered by the allies. Grant heaven that the King may adopt the wisest course! You have no idea of our situation.

You will have learnt that the Duke de Noailles has been in Languedoc. You may see by this how much troops are wanted in all quarters. M. de Roquelaure would have been glad to have retained those that were sent to him so seasonably; but my general took them back as quick as they had come. I hope they will give him some more to enable him to do something in Spain.

Marshal de Berwick refused to send any troops to M. de Roquelaure, and says that he has enough to do on every side with the enemy in Dauphiny. It is very fortunate that there has

been no revolt in Languedoc, though it contains so much disaffection, and the heat being still excessively great there.

LETTER CLVII.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, August 24th, 1710.

It is rumoured that the King of Spain has beaten M. de Stharemburg, and that the field of battle remained in possession of his Majesty; even the inmates of Saint Cyr have been rejoicing at the news; the Duchess of Burgundy does not tell me what the Queen of Spain has written to her on the subject, and I was rather surprised that there was nothing about it in your own letter.

We have at last heard that the Spanish troops were in disorder, and that the King of Spain had on this occasion only acquired a glory of which he had no need, but which it is always as well to increase; the accounts we have seen, speak highly of his intrepidity. I am delighted that the Marquis de Bay is near the King's person; it seems to me he is fortunate: I know that his Majesty is subject to the vapours, but I thought his appetite was good; he is young, however, and will soon be able to re-establish his

health. I understand that the Queen is full of inquietude on various subjects, and that you partake of them very sensibly, notwithstanding the apparent composure with which you have always spoken to me concerning her Majesty.

Bethune continues to be defended with great spirit; it cannot, however, hold out long. It is doubted whether the enemy dare attempt the siege of Aire, owing to its being in an excellent state of defence, and that the campaign is already far advanced.

LETTER CLVIII.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, November 10th, 1710.

I HAVE already told you, whatever you may write to me, that I shall always respect your grief, and partake of your sufferings, notwithstanding the offensive irony with which your letters abound.

If our ministers reason badly, it is not my fault. I have little more to do with public affairs than to be much afflicted at passing events; and I dare venture to assert that this is the only error with which I have to reproach myself.

Would to God that their Catholic Majesties may have a peace which may leave them something! For to imagine that the enemy will allow

Spain to remain in the hands of a French prince, is an idea that appears chimerical in this country. But to quit politics, which are not my forte, might I presume to conjure you to prevent, as much as possible, any serious misunderstanding between our Kings? for this would be a great calamity.

You do not know the state of France; and I agree that I do not deserve to be considered as a proper authority, since you have always suspected me of indulging panic terrors; but I am surprised that you will not believe Marshal de Villeroi and M. Amelot, who are both too sincere and well informed to tell you otherwise.

The memorial which you sent to Marshal de Villeroi has been returned to me; I have given it to M. Desmaretz, who has found it full of liberal and enlarged views; having kept it long enough to be enabled to appreciate its contents; he has at length informed me that it is impracticable, and that the person by whom it has been drawn up does not think our affairs in so bad a situation as they really are.

It is no longer doubted here, that if the Archduke dies, the Duke of Savoy will take his place, and with much more activity; everything we see is in such extremes, that the time is come when it would not be too much to hope for a miracle.

The Elector has been at Marly; every one has run after him with French levity; I believe I am

the only person who has not seen him. I was in my bed with all the leisure requisite to make reflections on the condition of the greater part of the European princes. The whole court has been very well satisfied with the Elector, and I think he must be equally so with the reception he has met with, although observing a strict incognito. The Duchess of Burgundy was foremost in her attentions, and we have already heard that she is delighted with him. As soon as he appeared in the saloon, which he entered along with the King, he recognised her by her fine complexion. I was the more vain of this, as the Princess of Conti was close to the Duchess; the former wished to appear in a scarf, on account of her pregnancy, and in a deshabelle, which does not at all become her. I prevailed upon her with much difficulty to dress and put on her ornaments: I confess I was greatly surprised at the change this produced in her appearance, for she did not seem to have been more than five months in the above state; she has a very good face, and looked extremely well, though covered with red and white. The Princess renewed an old acquaintance with the Elector, who, however, maintained that she could no longer recollect him, but she told him they had met in the cabinet of her mother, and that he counterfeited the Emperor.

The Queen of England has experienced an

attack of slow fever, which gradually wastes and debilitates her Majesty.

LETTER CLIX.

TO THE SAME.

Versailles, November 24th, 1710.

I AM more grateful than I can express at your saying that I inspire you with new life, when I give you any proof of my friendship and confidence. I have never changed my sentiments with regard to you, and if I have wrote to you somewhat coldly at certain times, it has been owing to the difference of our views, for there has never been any in our sentiments, and I dare assure you, that we both offer up the same prayers for their Catholic Majesties. The greater part of our courtiers think as we do, and their joy shows itself publicly in the hour of hope, as despair does when it is thought they cannot sustain themselves. Others have a difficulty in comprehending that all Europe has taken up arms to prevent the royal family of France from peaceably possessing two great monarchies; it will be very difficult for them to disarm, without having at least one of these monarchies, unless very fortunate circumstances prevent.

LETTER CLX.

TO THE SAME.

Versailles, December 5th, 1710.

IF I could fly, Madam, I would go and wait for you at Bagneres, to do its honours, and make you acquainted with all I know of that place, from the long abode which I made there with the Duke of Maine; it is true that these waters are as good in winter as summer, when care is taken to be warmly clothed. I also know with what ease children travel when they are properly attended to; this will, I am sure, be the case with regard to the Prince of Asturias. M. Fagon is convinced that Bareges would suit the queen better than Bagneres: I dare not hazard an opinion on the subject, not being sufficiently qualified to decide the point: we sincerely hope, however, that this remedy may be of service to the Queen; you have such prudence that there is no doubt of your managing everything with great skill: but I should feel truly happy to be near you on this occasion. The courier is going off in such haste that I have not time to say more; but you would be satisfied with me, if you saw what is passing here respecting your journey. The King has ordered that all the honours due to her station shall

be paid to the Queen ; there would even be a display of magnificence in addition to this, if the times were better, but I think you have no wish to put the people to any inconvenience in this respect.

LETTER CLXI.

TO THE SAME

Versailles, December 20th, 1710.

I HAVE been delighted to see a letter from you, in which you acknowledge that you are transported with joy : for, however pleasing an aspect you sometimes assume, I cannot help thinking you are often a prey to melancholy : this must now be laid aside, and the agreeable news enjoyed which you have given us, and which has put everybody at Versailles into such good humour. I am well assured that Paris is the same.

What honour and glory for the King of Spain to preserve his kingdom sword in hand ! You well know that I have always hoped for miracles in his favour : obtain one for us, as I wish to believe that your joy would not be complete if we were unfortunate.

As we know perfectly well how to humble ourselves in adversity, we also know how to be proud

in prosperity, and we already see M. de Sthar-
emberg defeated by the King, or the Duke de
Noailles, Catalonia in a state of revolt, and the
Archduke embarked to leave that vile people,
who are unworthy of him !

LETTER CLXII.

TO THE SAME.

Versailles, December 22nd, 1710.

THE news from Spain puts us in such a situa-
tion that we scarcely know ourselves ; the court
and the city are rejoicing, and in the expectation
of hearing of the entire defeat of M. de Stharem-
berg ; for you know that we easily pass from one
extremity to another, and that having thought
you quite lost, we now think you re-established
without a single enemy to contend with.

We expect every moment the official details,
and it will then be a new pleasure again to hear
them recapitulated. Those respecting the entry
of the King into Madrid affects everybody ; they
say that the public joy has gone so far as to make
M. de Vendome look more beautiful than Cupid,
whose name they have even given him. I think
they will be equally gratified at the return of the
Queen and Prince of Asturias, and that they will

not be sorry to see you ; at all events, we must leave the future in the hands of God, and enjoy the present.

Your politeness then will induce you to inquire after the three hundred children I have at Saint Cyr, knowing as you do the weakness of mothers ! although there is no great probability of your ever seeing them, I am certain you would admire the good order which exists in this establishment, which has never been obtained in the neighbourhood of Versailles.

The Duchess of Burgundy, as I always hoped, begins to maintain greater dignity, and causes more respect to be paid at court than formerly : the ladies no longer consider it a misfortune to dress themselves, and we experience the truth of what you say, that courtiers should be kept under the eyes of their masters. It appears to me, that since the adoption of the new system, there is less silly conversation, and our generals gain much by it, as they were, the preceding winters, the continual objects of slander and petty intrigues.

Marshal de Villars will command the army in Flanders ; he is well enough in health for that : Marshal de Berwick is in Dauphiny, and Marshal de Besons in Germany ; Marshal de Montrevel has received the King's orders to pay as much attention to the Queen as these unhappy times will admit ; but from the secret you have entrusted me

with, I fear she will hardly have sufficient resolution to leave Madrid. I entreat you will offer her my hearty congratulations on the late victory. There seems to be no want of subjects to create irritation; but when the mischief is done, its effects do not so quickly disappear.

LETTER CLXIII.

TO THE SAME.

Versailles, December 29th, 1710.

I WOULD most willingly obey your wishes, in giving you a minute detail of the manner in which the court received the wonderful news from Spain; I was not at Versailles, the King had gone to a hunt, and the Princess and Princesses were with him. M. de Torcy was the first person who arrived, accompanied by M. d'Antin, who returned with him; it was immediately surmised that there must be some good news, and joy soon spread in every direction. One of the King's equerries, a particular friend of mine, came to Saint Cyr, and begged I would hasten down to see him in the parlour; I then heard of the victory; and M. de Torcy's courier, who had joined the equerry, gave me the particulars. My three hundred and thirty daughters began by returning thanks to God; they were afterwards

permitted to rejoice, and the recreations still continue.

I was somewhat impatient to leave Saint Cyr, in order to witness the delight of the court; the King was enchanted with the personal glory of his grandson. My dear Princess, more susceptible than others, was transported: politicians, however, were less influenced by the events, as they do not think it will lead to any improvement of our affairs; but the greater number are highly pleased to see Stharemburg taken, and the Archduke also, or at least embarked to go where they please.

The King of Spain has great reason to rejoice; I saw the Duchess d'Alba yesterday; she appeared to be still affected by her first emotions, and I found her perfectly recovered from her long illness.

LETTER CLXIV.

TO THE SAME.

Marly, January 12th, 1711.

It is indeed astonishing, Madam, that you do not sink under the various situations you fill. You have all the affairs of Europe in your head; you are deeply interested in the fate of two Kings; you are not indifferent to the re-establishment of a third; you constitute all the solace, counsel, and pleasure of a great Queen; you know all the

details attached to her service and that of her precious infant : you enter heartily into the spirit of all your avocations, and to complete your troubles, you travel during the winter in a country where there are no roads ; when I passed from thence into Alsace, it is impossible to describe what I suffered.

It appears to me, that nothing can be more advisable than to conciliate the Arragonese while you are in this country, as the presence of their Majesties will facilitate these objects and gain popularity. From what we hear of the Duke de Noailles, he must be in Girona ; one of his engineers has sent word that he would pass the Christmas holidays there ; but our general is too experienced to make any such promise. I am very sorry it will be so long before he is likely to hear of the miracles which God has wrought in your behalf, as he will rejoice at it more than any one ; it is true you send him back M. de Stharemburg, but in a state little to be dreaded. Whatever part I take in your joy or consolation, I derive from the hopes of those around me. I cannot be tranquillized as to our own situation ; the enemy is very near us, and much exasperated ; he will make a last effort to overwhelm us : we have an army, but often ill paid, the magazines scantily provided, in a word, we want money, and there is a great deal to be done in every quarter if we had funds. It is very difficult for the best generalship to repair such evils.

The Spanish successes have diffused a joy which supports Paris: the news from Constantinople also encourages hope, while the troubles of England encrease daily, and we really imagine the moment at hand when we can profit from them. There is a person of your acquaintance that dare not be named, who fears all these remedies too tardy for a pressing evil.

I could sincerely wish M. de Stharemburg may be unable to re-enter Barcelona. It is only the news from Spain that keeps us alive here, and it arrives very sparingly: besides the real interest attached to it, we want a subject of rejoicing, and it is only you who can furnish us with one.

The Duchess de Burgundy amuses herself tolerably well here with hunting, dancing, and play: she regulates her own play very properly, but their poverty does not prevent the courtiers from shewing more money than we could have suspected them of possessing. The Duchess de Berri has no taste of this kind; her amusements consist in riding and galloping about, to the great risk of her neck. It is said that the assemblies of this year are very gay, there being many good female dancers, and who are not destitute of beauty. The Duke de Fronsac, son of the Duke de Richelieu, has just made his debut at court; he is sixteen years of age, but does not seem more than twelve; though so young, his figure is admirable; he has also a very handsome

face, and a finely formed head ; he dances very well, sits a horse very gracefully, plays, is fond of music, and converses on any subject. He is respectful, very polite, has a turn for agreeable raillery, but can be silent when necessary. When we remove to Versailles he is to marry Mademoiselle de Noailles, only daughter of Madame de Richelieu, who will have a fortune of five hundred thousand crowns. She is very plain, has a good figure, is sensible, and about eighteen years of age. M. and Madame Voison are about to marry their third daughter to the Count de Châtillon. Our Princess is very fond of weddings, and in order to please her, they will be married at Versailles. These pleasures do not prevent M. Voison and M. Desmaretz from being busily occupied with the approaching campaign, which everybody thinks will be a very important one.

The King not being able to accommodate all the male and female dancers, some were sent to Luciennes, where M. and Madame de Carvio entertain them with great magnificence. The King and Queen of England came to the ball with the Princess, on Sunday last, and return on Wednesday. The King is so feeble that he could only dance two courantos, his head became so giddy that he could not attempt a third ; he is sad and downcast, without any apparent illness or fresh cause : I have not seen the Queen in such good

health, or looking so well for a long time, though she is not more cheerful than usual. I do not think the Chevalier de Saint-George will serve during the next campaign.

LETTER CLXV.

TO THE SAME.

St. Cyr, February 11th, 1711.

THE enemy appears to be struck, as you observe, with the victories of his Catholic Majesty. They talk of diversions, and wish to send fourteen thousand men to Barcelona. The Emperor and the German Princes have occasion for their troops on account of our dear friends the Turks, but up to the present moment this is but merely rumoured; and I shall not be satisfied till I see some troops march. It seems to me that there has always been some expectation of peace at this season of the year, notwithstanding which the campaigns go on; I fear this year will pass in the same manner. I agree with you, however, that our arrangements are better than those of former campaigns, that our officers exert themselves, and that M. Desmaretz is in hopes of obtaining money. I shall not detail to you all that I have heard respecting the siege of Barcelona: some

persons say that it will be raised ; others, that the place is not worth taking, and that it would be better for the enemy to divide his forces between Catalonia and Portugal, than to direct them upon a single point. Despise us, Madam, as much as you please, I give myself entirely up to you.

The Duchess of Burgundy enjoys herself as much as she can. The Princess of England dances with equal sprightliness, and attends the balls at Marly of her own accord. The King and Queen are expected here to-morrow, and the balls will take place before supper, because the Prince is not strong enough to sit up late ; his health is, however, a little better.

The Spanish war is not looked upon as concluded here ; it is thought that M. de Stharémberg will be able to take the field again with what troops he can collect, and those which may be sent to him. Our little prodigy, the Duke de Fronsac, left Marly yesterday for the purpose of being married ; he is expected back on Saturday ; a prettier creature was never seen ; I know of nothing more that will be of any interest to you, your mind being occupied upon subjects of greater importance.

LETTER CLXVI.

TO THE SAME.

Versailles, March 9th, 1711.

It is very flattering to me, that the privation of my letters can sour your temper; I write to you nearly every eight days, and I do not recollect having omitted to do so more than twice. I was very much affected by the service rendered to you by the Duke de Noailles, and the glory which he has acquired; it has been the predominant topic at Paris, where the poets have made it the theme of their labours. The Court is not quite so prodigal of its praises.

It is not for me to thank with all humility their Catholic Majesties for what they have done for our general; but I cannot help participating in his gratitude; I feel for his health; he is not strong, and is greatly affected by all that occurs. The want of subsistence for the cavalry, and the delay in your arrangements, also put him out of humour. The lady of Marshal Noailles has interrupted my letter, and is highly pleased with her son's title of Grandee.

I am very sorry to see you obliged to quit the

Queen and Prince; this mutual arrangement gives me too many fears respecting your complaint, not to be very uneasy at it. The King approves your journey to Bagnères, and sincerely wishes you may recover your health; but we are strangers to the waters of that place, and M. Fagon thinks those of Ancosse, carried to you there, would be preferable.

Our anxieties concerning the war in Flanders are about to be renewed: Prince Eugene and M. de Marlborough are expected there on the 15th instant; we hoped to have anticipated them.

LETTER CLXVII.

TO THE SAME

Versailles, March 22d, 1711.

THE Duchess de Bourgogne yesterday gave me your letter couched more mysteriously than usual, yet I found nothing in it to justify such an air, and I do not now expect much news from your quarter.

Marshal de Villeroi is better, and is expected to-day or to-morrow. The Princess de Vaudemont paid me a visit at Saint Cyr, during which you were not forgotten. You now know that

the King has consented to the title of Grandee being accepted by the Duke de Noailles. The Duke de Richelieu sends him the Duke de Fronsac, for the purpose of removing him to a distance from this, and learn his profession under a man whom he thinks so capable. The satirist Despreaux died a few days ago; Madame de Torcy has been dangerously ill, owing to a severe fall, and is expected [to have a premature confinement.

I know nothing of the King of England's journey in Switzerland; but he is going to make one all over France, without any other view or advantage than that of travelling, change of air, and amusement; the Queen, his mother, is greatly affected to see him in this way: it is a deep melancholy, which nothing can dissipate.

God grant that you do not flatter yourself too much, that the enemy will not be able to succour the Archduke, that your good friends the Turks may be more expeditious, that our fine army may be successful, and that our enemies may see that we are still in a condition to defend ourselves.

LETTER CLXVIII.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, April 4th, 1711.

PEOPLE are not altogether agreed upon the intended operations of your campaign; few persons approve of the siege of Barcelona, for fear of losing by an unfortunate event the favourable position in which you are at present; but it is not for me to say more on this subject.

I attach so little credit to the rumours now circulating relative to your quarrel with M. de Vendome, that I do not think I have as yet mentioned them to you; it appears to me that neither of you are of a quarrelsome disposition, nor do I imagine that any attention has been paid to the report in question, any more than to that which brings you to Bagnères, in order to proceed to Rome afterwards, having quarrelled both with France and Spain! That which I cannot comprehend is the number of your enemies, for, however great the part you act, I do not think your situation by any means enviable: I hope your good sense and natural tranquillity of disposition will induce you to look upon all these rumours with the contempt they deserve.

[LETTER CLXIX.]

TO THE SAME.

Marly, April 27th, 1711.

WHAT an event the death of the Emperor is for Spain and France! God grant that we may derive all the advantages which may be expected from it, and that our Kings may enjoy a peace sufficiently long to repair the evils of war!

You will have heard of the death of the Duchess de Villeroi, under similar circumstances with regard to her sickness as that of Monseigneur; but she made three confessions. Her family is very much afflicted, and her husband inconsolable. The Dauphiness and the Duchess regret this loss, which is also lamented by the whole court. But nothing can equal the situation of the Marshal de Boufflers and his lady; they have lost their eldest son, and are about to lose their oldest daughter, who is seventeen or eighteen years of age, but so sensible, that she lived with her mother as with a friend. While proceeding in their carriage to obtain medical assistance, it was upset and the glasses broken, by which they were wounded in several places; the lady of the Marshal, who had been already unwell, is now

attacked by acute pains in the head, and the Marshal himself is so feeble that he cannot attend the King, who is therefore without a Captain of the Guards, for Marshal d'Harcourt is equally unable to do duty.

Our campaign is on the point of opening; the armies are in the field. I have no doubt but M. de Marlborough is also there, although we have no account of it as yet: Prince Eugene was on the road, but perhaps he will think it more advisable to return to Vienna. Meanwhile our armies are only separated by a river, and it is affirmed that in the present situation of things the enemy may be expected to give us battle. I dare not tell you how much I am terrified at this!

Our little prodigy, the Duke of Fronsac, has finished his career by playing so many wild pranks, that the Duke de Richelieu applied to the King to put him into the Bastille, where he has been for three or four days.

LETTER CLXX.

TO THE DUCHESS OF ALBA.

Marly, June 8th, 1711.

I REQUESTED the curate of Saint Sulpice to acquaint you that I had received the letter with which you honoured me. I did not explain my-

self more clearly, because you wished the affair to remain secret.

I should feel myself much embarrassed to tell you what use the King will make of what you have sent me; for it appears to me very doubtful what kind of counsel ought to be given to his grandson, but we see by letters received yesterday from Spain, that everything is ready for this campaign. The King accompanies the Queen to Coretta, and will only leave her to make an occasional excursion to the army, in order to be ready for any opportunity that may offer of signalizing himself. You have doubtless the same news; but I know none which can alleviate your affliction, and I have reason to think it must be excessive, judging of all I hear on the subject. I regret very much not being able to condole with you personally, and to talk of him whom you have lost; he certainly merited every species of praise; but according to all appearances he is happier than those who lament his death. You are remembered in the prayers offered up at Saint Cyr; we did expect to have had the honour of seeing you, but it seems that we are always destined to be disappointed.

Whatever may happen, I wish you to believe me, with the most profound respect, your very humble and very obedient servant.

LETTER CLXXI.

TO THE PRINCESS DES URSINS.

Saint Cyr, June 18th, 1711.

GRANT heaven that all your prospects may succeed, and that the Queen may be perfectly cured at Corretta; that the King may distinguish himself in a battle, of which all the advantage is on his side, that the Archduke may depart with the Archduchess to Vienna, that the Catalonians may repent of their fidelity to them, and that your affairs may be in a better condition at the end of the campaign than they are at present! But you may conceive that some little anxiety is mixed up with these wishes, and that I am not very well satisfied with the succour which M. de Stharemburg has received.

It will be an awful destiny if the situation of France and Spain should be rendered worse by the death of the Emperor; should this be the case, it must be acknowledged more than ever, that the views of men are very short sighted, since the best informed politicians have said, and daily repeat, that it is impossible for us not to profit by the above event.

I am sensibly affected by what you tell me, for the first time, of the present state of your affairs. Marshal de Villeroi has on this occasion shown

himself one of the most active, ardent, and decided friends ; but what can be said when we are continually assured that all our resources are at an end ; and it is daily declared we must confine ourselves to supporting the army ? I shall not, however, fail to address the King on the subject again ; it is really shameful that a person like you should be under the necessity of soliciting on such a matter, but I am told there is no possibility of conforming to your wishes.

It is not thought here that you have a sufficient superiority over your enemies, to undertake a siege in their presence ; and everybody is apprehensive lest you should lose the advantages you now possess. You are very unjust when you doubt of the interest which we take in your affairs.

LETTER CLXXII.

TO THE SAME.

Marly, June 22nd, 1711.

I CAN easily conceive that the Queen's malady has made you forget your own, and has induced you to delay going to Bagnères : I wish her Majesty would take you there herself, and that she might come to Bareges to drink the waters and bathe ; it is on account of her glandular affection that I am anxious she should try this remedy,

but it is not for me to give my advice upon the health of such an august personage.

Nothing is finer, or more munificent, than what their Majesties are doing for the Duchess of Alba. I have sent that unhappy woman a copy of the passage of your letter which concerns her, for I am aware of the interest she takes in everything that comes from you.

I see with much displeasure, that our enemies do not become weary of persecuting you, and that they are all closely united to place prodigious power in the hands of a single prince; it is to be hoped that God will not suffer this.

I pity the Duke de Vendome; if he is reduced to the defensive, it will not suit his courage. His lady is full terror, and as much impressed with the apprehension of dying as the Duke!

LETTER CLXXIII.

TO THE SAME.

Marly, July 13th, 1711.

It is my destiny to live in fear, and I am at present alarmed for Spain. We are assured that M. de Stharemborg has twenty-two thousand men, and that an English fleet is bringing him some more. Be prudent, Madam, and all will go on well.

In reading your letter, in order to reply to it, I see that you think yourself superior to the enemy, and that my advice to be prudent is not well timed; but I hope you will not be the slave of this advice.

I know not what to say about the Duke de Noailles; he would be much altered, if he left Spain so long as he could be useful to it. You are about to have a great minister and a perfectly honest man in the person of M. de Bergheitz, at least such is his character both in Flanders and France.

I yesterday saw the Duchess of Alba at Saint Cyr. She still flatters herself with being able to set out for Spain; I think, however, we shall find her on our return from Fontainebleau. Her grief is great, but it is rational and prudent; she is fully sensible of her obligations to you, and she has the same attachment that her late husband had for the King and Queen. You may easily conceive that she has abandoned her little retreat near Valle-de-Grace, which she is at liberty to visit without having resolution enough to take advantage of it. M. d'Aubigny sees her every day; she is delighted with his generosity and merit; she has, moreover, a brother-in-law of whom she speaks in very high terms. Madame du Casse paid her great attention on the death of the Duke. We had some conversation relative to M. d'Aubigny; I wished him to return to

Madrid, in consequence of what she told me of his talents, and how much he is beloved at your court, but she alleged many reasons for retaining him at Paris.

I think that the Duchess de St. Pierre would have acted a fine part, in bringing to you a young person who is your relation, and you would have performed a great act of charity in receiving her.

How I pity you for the loss of the Duchess de Popoli, whom the King panegyricized but yesterday! It is a sad situation to have no bosom friend; but the loss of one is still worse.

If you are superior to your enemies, how does it happen that you do not suppress those freebooters who commit so many outrages on the highways of Spain?

LETTER CLXXIV.

TO THE SAME.

Fontainebleau, July 26th, 1711.

I do not forget that I have received none of your letters these eight days; I was honoured with one from the Queen, full of esteem and friendship for you, and of those generous sentiments which the great are not accustomed to show, though there is no reason to doubt their entertaining them inwardly: the Queen's malady

seems to have affected your health, while the continued uncertainty of your affairs embitters your enjoyments; your system has been heated; your diet does not protect you from frequent attacks of cholic, and you will have occasion for remedies which you cannot procure at Madrid.

It is true that M. Fagon would wish the Queen to go to Bareges, as he has seen wonders effected by the waters: their quality is that of a dissolvent which acts without violence: they have been found very efficacious in various disorders, and may be equally so in glandular cases.

Near the great bath, there is a small one, and so refreshing that you will often frequent it, for it is always ready; it will be necessary to go to Bagnères afterwards. The Spaniards will, however, feel great objections to let their Queen come into France, though it should only be half a league. You must first drive out M. de Stharemburg.

You refer me to the Duke de Noailles for news relative to your campaign, and I have received no letter from him, but I believe his mother and wife have heard from him. He must have his reasons for this silence, and I hope he will give them to me.

M. d' Aubigny afforded me much pleasure yesterday, in assuring me that you intended to act on the defensive, and that you could sustain yourselves in spite of the enemy's force.

We are anxious about Dauphiny; Marshal de

Berwick complains loudly that he has not troops enough to oppose himself to the Duke of Savoy, who on his side advances as rapidly as he can; the Dauphiness is deeply afflicted by our misfortunes.

LETTER CLXXV.

TO THE SAME.

Fontainebleau, August 15th, 1711.

I wish, with all my heart, that their Catholic Majesties may find in M. de Bergheitz all the resources his reputation justifies them in anticipating. I trust also, that the new remedy resorted to by the Queen may prove successful.

It is true that our Princes find themselves very well here: but every one speaks according to his taste or interest, without wishing to submit to the opinions of others. If the King of Spain had put himself at the head of his army, and it had not acted, everybody would have disapproved of it the next moment; if he removed to a distance from the operations of the campaign, he would be censured; he remains near them, and this is also disapproved of; we are all in the same predicament, and have no remedy but patience.

We are at present in great anxiety with regard to Flanders, where affairs do not by any means

wear a favourable aspect; but you will learn the particulars from persons better informed than I am. It is lamentable to be thus hemmed in on all sides, nevertheless we have for many years been preserved by a miracle, in being enabled to hold out against all Europe so firmly united against us.

It is said that the Duke of Savoy is very much indisposed, and that if his malady continues he may return to Turin. He is so able a general, that I think it would be of great advantage to us if he were absent from his army.

You do me justice in thinking me entirely devoted to our Kings, and I am really so to such a degree, that whatever honours may have been conferred on me, I could wish never to have been known by them; for they form the misfortune of my life, having never been able to turn their kindnesses to my own interest without being so mindful of theirs as to make myself wretched. The Count de Toulouse is somewhat better; but there is a danger of relapse, because he has been recommended to hunt; the Duchess often accompanies him; she begins to be more tranquil on his account. The Duchess de Berri has recovered her health, although she has done many things which might have totally ruined it.

LETTER CLXXVI.

TO THE SAME.

Fontainebleau, August 23d, 1711.

MARSHAL de Villeroi has been very little here I informed you that he withdraws when his master advances ; I am really angry with him for this ; our conversations are by no means frequent, nor are they very agreeable, for we dispute a great deal. I am told he has arrived, but I have not yet seen him. I cannot answer what you require, not having heard a word about it from the Duke de Noailles. I thought that he would soon come, but all is changed ; and I am quite reconciled to it, provided he renders some service to their Catholic Majesties. It has been strongly affirmed that the army of M. de Stharemburg is stronger than yours, but you are aware of the efforts to decry our affairs. I should have a high opinion of your troops, if the Archduke was gone ; but you mention nothing of it in your letter of the 12th, which I expected to confirm this news.

We yesterday lost the best man in France, the most sincerely attached to the King, and the warmest of my personal friends ; you will easily recognise Marshal de Boufflers by this portrait. He was so much affected by the dangerous state

of Bouchain, that it went to his heart, he became ill immediately, and did not survive four days; his wife arrived time enough to witness the distressing event.

Our affairs are very much changed in Flanders; Bouchain cannot be saved, and military men agree that two armies were never so posted as that of the enemy and ours. Paris, the court, and the whole army rail loudly against the Duke de Villars; however, the King is convinced, with others, that this general has been more unfortunate than incapable.

LETTER CLXXVII.

TO THE SAME.

Fontainebleau, August 30th, 1711.

It is true that we have been much agitated here from the apprehensions of a battle, and we are now in affliction at the loss of Bouchain, and of which you may conceive I have no doubt; I am so much accustomed to guessing on the worse side of the question, that I cannot overcome my fears.

How vexed I am that the Archduke does not quit Catalonia! His absence made me already build very agreeable castles in the air, and I hoped everything from the inconstancy of the Catalonians. Nothing must be omitted to bring

about a peace ; we are all weary of the war, and an end of it is most desirable.

I wish with all my heart that the baths may relieve the Queen. A poor citizen's wife would be an object of pity, in being prevented from looking for health where she expected to find it ; but the great have to constrain themselves in every respect : the Queen is adored ; to lose her would cause a fatal alarm, and yet they will not allow her to absent herself for three weeks !

LETTER CLXXVIII.

TO THE SAME.

Fontainbleau, September 14th, 1711.

I HAVE received two of your letters at the same time ; one of the 2d, and the other of the 5th inst. If I were to answer them regularly, I ought to begin with Marshal de Villeroy ; I acquiesce in his reasons, not being able to convince him of mine. I have already told you, that he wished to pass from disgrace to favour, and that I thought it should be done gradually ; he answers, that he has not time for this, that he has made up his mind on the subject, and that he accommodates himself very well to his present mode of life, but which I do not believe ; if, how-

ever, he is as correct in this as in other matters, I am of his opinion, that it is better to remain as he is, than become a courtier; such is the state of the question between us.

I am very much surprised at this change in the prospects of the Duke de Noailles, and have no doubt of the uprightness of his intentions, which may, however, have been formed too hastily; he writes to me about his return, without giving me the reasons, and refers me, for complete elucidation, to our first interview. I shall now proceed to your second letter. I am delighted to find you are satisfied with M. de Bonac, and I augur well from it for the result of his negociation.

The King appeared very well satisfied yesterday with the answers from Spain. If you saw what passes here, you would only sigh for peace; there is no one breathing more anxious for it than myself.

I hope you will derive great assistance from Count de Bergeitz; no one can possess the reputation he does without great merit.

We are momentarily expecting the capture of Bouchain, and I am about to experience fresh anxieties for some other enterprise, as the weather is favourable. Give us peace, Madam, if you wish the King to terminate his life in repose.

LETTER CLXXIX.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, September 20th, 1711.

YES, Madam, I am very well satisfied with you, and I own you to be a good Frenchwoman; I will scold you no more; but the work must be finished, for it is absolutely necessary; the King can no longer reanimate his armies, and the misfortunes which have happened to us render everything difficult. In short, nothing but peace can redeem our affairs; I dare not say that even after that I shall die content, for it seems you do not wish me to die; well, then, I promise to live, and I think I may yet experience some enjoyment.

I am not displeased at what is passing in Spain; Philip V. reigns there, and is popular; I cannot, however, think that the departure of the Archduke is a matter of trifling importance.

You will have heard of the brave defence of M. de Marignan at Bouchain, and the foolish capitulation which he has made. We not only commit faults, but are unfortunate; peace is the only remedy!

LETTER CLXXX.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, October 4th, 1711.

WE were informed yesterday evening that the enemy had appeared on your side; you may conceive that I tremble lest some unfavourable event should happen, and which would be disastrous as affairs now stand; but, after carefully surveying the map, it was reasonable to doubt the probability of a battle. I hope the Almighty will not oppose what you, and I, and all France are so anxious about!

Your last letters acquainted us with the embarkation of the Archduke, the confirmation of which news I expected; I believe it yet, since there are some Princes setting out to meet him.

I am delighted to have made you speak on the subject of the Queen, by telling you that your Princess loves as a private individual. Cannot she be a 'great Queen, and act a part above her sex, without loving as a citizen's wife? a fault with which our King often reproached the late Prince; but after all, I rejoice with you, if she possesses all that you say, and which could not be better disposed of than for you. How fortunate that there was no more warfare except between you and me!

You have then declared for Marshal de Villeroi, and you charge me to cause all that he has lost to be restored to him; I should certainly like to do so, but success is not always attained without some difficulty.

The Duke de Noailles assigns no other reason for his return, than his being no longer useful to you in Spain.

The affairs of religion become more and more embroiled, and the King is as tired of them as you can conceive.

LETTER CLXXXI.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, October 11th, 1711.

You, Madam, have sometimes given me reason to believe that you prefer Spain to France, and that you did not wish to comprehend how necessary peace is to us; it is not, perhaps, so much with regard to those points which strike everybody, as through those which cannot be made the subject of a letter, and which I hope we shall never be obliged to discuss.

I say, and shall always maintain till I see a change, that I know nothing in you but justice, probity, and goodness; conceive, therefore, if it be possible to destroy the impressions created by

such virtue. All these qualities will not, however, prevent me from differing with you when I see that you tax with timidity my view of the alarming situations through which we have passed, and which we may have again to pass, if this peace, so much desired by all parties, is not concluded.

But I shall not consider any peace disadvantageous that fixes Philip V. upon his throne; although it should cost much to both of us, it will be sufficiently great for our King to have united the Spanish monarchy to his own dynasty, in spite of all Europe armed against him.

I am not without uneasiness respecting some letters from Spain which I saw yesterday; I am afraid of an action, and think we ought to remain quiet in the present conjuncture. We no longer doubt but that the Archduke has departed, but I should not like to hear of his leaving the Archduchess at Barcelona.

It is true that no person in the world can be more estimable than the Queen of England. Many people think that the King, her son, would be recalled if peace was made. It is asserted that the Princess Anne is threatened with the dropsy, and that her death at this moment would not be advantageous to us.

Marshal de Villars will remain where he is as long as possible, in order to see the enemy depart; it is thought that the want of forage will compel

them to decamp first; but this will never be so soon as the general officers desires.

LETTER CLXXXII.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, October 18th, 1711.

YOUR letter of the 7th instant had alarmed me respecting the uncertainty of the Archduke's departure; but in comparing it with one I have received from the Queen, I find the latter is dated on the 9th, so that I no longer doubt that the Prince is gone; but I am very sorry that he has left the Archduchess behind.

The election has terminated, and the Archduke is Emperor. It is to be hoped that the Spaniards will not consent to have a King whom they will never see, and that the small number of those who are attached to the House of Austria will soon be reduced to the necessity of acknowledging Philip V.

We rejoice much at all your successes, which are considerable, since they tend to check the enemy. I have no occasion for a prolongation of life; but, I confess, I should much like to see the issue of the present state of things, which adds to the ardour I have for peace.

I am delighted that their Catholic Majesties are returned to Madrid ; but I cannot agree with you that you are unnecessary to them, and still less to the Prince of Asturias ; I do not know how you can make up your mind to leave them, if it be only for eight days.

I yesterday saw Marshal de Villeroi here ; he has no occasion for my friendly offices with you ; but you have great reason to place him among your best friends.

The Duke de Fronsac is recovered from the small-pox, and is still in the Bastille, where he conducts himself with the greatest prudence.

We experienced a slight shock of an earthquake here on the 6th ; though not perceived by many, it was felt at Paris and the adjacent villages. There has been an alarming one at Saumur, which lasted four days, accompanied with a frightful and subterraneous noise ; though much mischief was done, it does not appear that any lives have been lost.

A very surprising accident has happened at Lyons. There is a religious feast held annually a short distance from the city, which attracted more than twenty thousand persons this year, some going there from devotion and others for pleasure.

It is customary at Lyons for everybody to return into the city on the ringing of a bell at a certain hour ; the crowd was so eager to enter on this occasion, that numbers were crushed to death

on the bridge, while many others fell into the Rhone.

A coach overthrown upon the bridge prevented those who wished to escape the danger from returning. More than two hundred persons have perished on this melancholy occasion.

LETTER CLXXXIII.

TO THE SAME.

Versailles, October 26th, 1711.

It seems to me that everything goes on as well as we could wish in Spain; and that without troubling yourselves about events which might impede the negociations, you press M. de Stharemberg in so closely, that there is no reason to believe he will ever be able to dethrone Philip V. I could only wish the beautiful Archduchess had followed the Emperor; for it is a pledge of his return which may affect the people. It should seem that the Catalonians have changed their natural character in his favour, and that they are always devoted to those who are not their legitimate princes. Grant that the health of the Queen may be in unison with the good state of affairs! If her tumours do not adhere, it is a matter of little consequence, as we cure them every day at

Saint Cyr. All Paris is rejoiced at the negotiations for peace, and it would give you pleasure to see how much we are delighted to think that their Catholic Majesties retain the crown. The English exact no secrecy; their plenipotentiaries and ours being already named, the fact must be generally known. I endeavour to give myself up to joy; but there are moments of alarm; I tremble for the health of Queen Anne, whom we tenderly love at the present moment.

A thousand particulars were related to me yesterday, concerning the devotion of the Duke of Savoy: it is said to be sincere, and that he is anxious to repair as much as possible the evils which he has caused; that he endeavours to find out those individuals who have suffered most from the war, in order to restore to them what they have lost; and that it was never his wish to make incursions into France, publicly asserting that this sort of warfare did no good whatever to the common cause, and merely ruined the inoffensive people.

The affairs of religion get worse daily: Cardinal de Noailles opposes the Jesuits, and would wish to get rid of them; the King supports them: judge of the consequences.

In the midst of the important affairs which are constantly before your eyes, I think you will not be insensible to the pleasure of receiving the King and Queen at Madrid, and of seeing them

admire the apartments which you have prepared for them ; all which are, no doubt, in the best style.

LETTER CLXXXIV.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, November 2nd, 1711.

My joy at the hopes of peace is already checked, by the great difficulties which the Dutch oppose to it ; they loudly cry out against the conditions to which the English have listened, and are procrastinating as much as possible, in order to cavil about where the plenipotentiaries should meet. It would have argued a want of common sense not to have foreseen all this, and a thousand other difficulties which will arise before the conclusion of such an important affair. This is very natural ; but my narrow and anxious mind easily takes the alarm.

The loss of the Dutch fleet before Quebec will perhaps contribute to render our enemies less presumptuous ; the hand of God visibly appears in this : it is said that three thousand men were landed in a different direction from that which the fleet took, and that they will have great difficulty in saving themselves.

LETTER CLXXXV.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, November 8th, 1711.

I THOUGHT their Catholic Majesties at Madrid, and I participate in the affliction of your brave Castilians, on seeing their joy retarded.

I am not surprised at the resources you find in Count de Bergheitz; his reputation is too general not to be well founded. I wish, with all my heart, that M. de Vendome may accede to the reasons you have at present for acting with the greatest circumspection.

The continuance of the Archduchess at Barcelona disconcerts me greatly; I could wish she were gone, and that the Catalonians had not this pledge of the Archduke's return. I think he must wish it himself, and that he would be very well satisfied to remain an Emperor. It is said, however, that he joins the Dutch in their fury against the English, who do not seem to grow weaker from all the menaces which they receive. I was favoured with a letter yesterday from Marshal de Tallard, dated at Calais: he assures me very positively that a peace must take place, if nothing unforeseen occurs.

Everybody is convinced, that soon after the

peace we shall see the King of England restored. Many people think that the English will never receive our dear Queen, from the fear they have of her zeal for catholicism. I think she would be very easily reconciled to passing the remainder of her life at Chaillot; for she is but little attached to the world. The King went to Saint Germain two days ago, and found her in perfect health and good humour, well convinced that it is as yet premature to enter on the subject of the King, her son.

I do not know who is likely to marry the Princess of England; but, according to all appearances, she will make an excellent wife. It has never been in contemplation to give her the husband which you say we have taken away from her.

LETTER CLXXXVI.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, November 16th, 1711.

How glad I am to be able to share joy with you! I no longer doubt of peace, and am as confident as you have seen me mistrustful with respect to the past. Their Catholic Majesties remain upon their thrones! This is the miracle which I hoped for in the depth of my despair;

their virtue has attracted it, but we profit from the event. M. Hensius will hang himself for having refused the frightful peace which would perhaps have been made in former years. I feel no compassion on that subject, and all my affection at this moment is for Queen Anne, who adheres firmly in her resolutions, and has sent Madame Buyssen back to Holland. You will hear all this news through the account which is given to their Catholic Majesties. Our Dauphin is transported with joy at the hopes of peace. It appears to me that Queen Anne presses the negociation very much; and this is all in our favour; for I wish most sincerely that the approaching campaign may not take place, though preparations are making for it, as I have already informed you.

How numerous are the pleasures which you must enjoy at present! You are once more with the King and Queen, from whom you have been separated so long; you caress the charming Prince of Asturias; you receive him in a palace which has been restored by yourself, and which is, therefore, the work of your own hands; you see the people transported with joy at again beholding their King; you are also the harbinger of peace: they are about to enjoy the fruits of their fidelity in repose; the gravity of the Catholic King must yield at least in private to so many sources of satisfaction, the Queen's malady must disappear, and the Archduchess ought to go and be made an

Empress: this is not surely wishing her too much harm.

I am in a very good humour, Madam, and if I were alone with you in the dark room at Marly, our conversation would not be languid; but you are still better at Madrid.

Marshal de Tallard has returned, and looks much older, but possessing the same vivacity as formerly; he is fully persuaded that we shall have peace, and he gives very plausible reasons for this opinion. Nothing would afflict me now if the peace of the church followed that of Europe; but the quarrel of Cardinal de Noailles with the Jesuits excites general attention. An accommodation is at present talked of; if it does not succeed, I shall be extremely sorry for all that the church is likely to suffer in consequence, and to see the name of Noailles in some degree disgraced. I dare say you are of the same opinion.

LETTER CLXXXVII.

TO THE SAME.

Versailles, November 22nd, 1711.

I no longer care whether it is the Emperor's death or the broils of England which are to give us peace; it is enough to be able to hope for it, which I do with more confidence every day; I rejoice at it with you. As much as I am afflicted

by the wars, I am not, however, without some uneasiness at the impossibility of pressing the negotiations; for I do not wish to see another campaign, although great preparations are making for it here.

You are right in being unable to comprehend what is passing between the King and Marshal de Villeroy; I think the latter is wrong, and his friends think as I do.

The declaration of your plenipotentiaries gives me pleasure, like all other measures which have a pacific tendency. Our Dauphiness receives the court every day, in the large apartment of the Queen, which you know; and the King has had the complaisance to order the end of the gallery to be closed up on his side of the palace, thus making another room, in which she plays lansquenet. The Dauphin also plays there, but at a less hazardous game, called the butterfly: I do not know whether you are acquainted with it.

LETTER CLXXXVIII.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, November 30th, 1711.

I HAVE no news this post, which is perhaps detained in consequence of the great floods everywhere. It has rained for a month both day and night; but it does not signify, as, according to all

appearance, we shall have peace. The passports are sent, and the Dutch have begun to change their tone: Philip V. and his amiable descendants will reign upon the throne of Spain; I have always hoped for a miracle in his favour. It is in his train that we are profiting by what has just happened, and which he deserves much more than ourselves.

I yet hope, old as I am, that I shall see the King of England return to his own kingdom.

What glory for our King to have sustained a ten years' war against all Europe, encountered every species of misfortune, experienced a famine and plague, which has destroyed thousands, and to see all this terminated by a peace which unites the monarchy of Spain to his own dynasty, and re-establishes a Catholic King in his kingdoms! for I can scarcely doubt of all this being the consequence of peace.

It is said we must yet wait ten or twelve days before we can receive the passports coming from England. I have reason to believe that our plenipotentiaries will set out in less than a quarter of an hour after they are received.

The Dauphiness readily seizes every cause for joy, and enters into it with the utmost exultation. She figures to herself that of the Queen, speaks to me of yours, and wishes to do something the day peace is concluded that she has never done before, and which she will only do then. She has

not yet discovered what it is to be ; but, in the mean time, she will go to hear *Te Deum* at Notre Dame, dine with the Duchess de Lude at her splendid new house, afterwards to the opera, sup with the Prince de Rohan at his magnificent residence, and conclude the evening at play and in dancing. As the time of her return will be about my waking hour, she asks me to breakfast on arriving here. I think you would find this day rather long, notwithstanding all these enjoyments.

LETTER CLXXXIX.

TO THE SAME.

Versailles, December 14th, 1711.

WE have no letter from you by to-day's post ; but I cannot suffer ours to depart without rejoicing with you at the perseverance of the English in wishing for peace ; they even show great eagerness for it, and this agrees very well with my impatience. I had already began to despair, owing to the delay I observed in their answers. I am much pleased with this last news, which describes the whole progress of the negociation, so that I hope to be tranquil till the 12th of January.

I do not accustom myself to the agreeable idea

of seeing peace made, and the King of Spain established upon his throne, and more particularly so than any other, by the affection of his admirable Castilians. Is it true that you have let your prisoners witness the entrance of their Majesties into Madrid? I highly approve this proof of your goodness towards them.

LETTER CXC.

TO THE SAME.

Versailles, December 28th, 1711.

WE have no news from you, and I have but little to send from our court. We are expecting the passports on Wednesday or Thursday, and if they come, it is said our plenipotentiaries will depart on Saturday. My hopes cannot avoid being a little thwarted by all that we hear of the Dutch and the Emperor. It is to be hoped that England will be firm. It is said that the Queen begins openly to announce to her parliament, that it is necessary to make peace.

I have placed all the letters you sent me into the hands of Marshal de Villeroy; I would not have given them to the Duke de Noailles, if I had believed that there was the least expression which could hurt the feelings of any person; but it seems to me, that you only abuse myself in them, by

your reproaches and raillery; as for the rest of their contents, they consist of praises lavished upon your Princes and our own; as well as upon the individuals of whom we generally speak. Perhaps M. d'Estrées might have found some remarks applicable to him, but I think them too just not to own that they were merited.

In short, I have obeyed your orders, and that is sufficient for me. I shall for the future burn whatever I receive; but I only kept those for the particular reasons I had, with respect to everything that was passing in Spain before the journey you made here.

LETTER CXCI.

TO THE SAME.

Versailles, January 3d, 1712.

It is true that I hope for peace, although it meets with great obstacles, and all our enemies are in motion to prevent it. Our plenipotentiaries set out on Tuesday. It is not for me to reason, but it appears that the King of Spain cannot put his interests into better hands than those of his grandfather, and it is not probable that he will derive greater advantage from any other mode of proceeding. It is certain that we wish as much as you, (and this includes everything,) that the

King of Spain should be established upon his throne. There is no peace but what will be glorious to us with that condition attached to it; I have a notion, however, that this peace will meet with many obstacles, and occasion me still some alarm.

There is certainly a kind of fatality in what concerns Marshal de Villeroy; he desires nothing so much as to stand well with his sovereign; this sovereign reproaches himself; I neglect nothing to bring about a reconciliation; but all in vain, and I am truly sorry for it. The affairs of the church are not yet arranged. It is true that Marshal de Tallard is publicly spoken of as governor to the Duke of Brittany, though he has not yet been thought of. It is also true, that Marshal d'Utelles is said to be jealous of the friendship that subsists between M. de Torcy and the Abbé de Polignac; but they are all animated by so good a spirit, and such upright intentions, that I hope it will show itself, and that our affairs may not go on the less prosperously. The first president has sent in his resignation to the King, being too much indisposed to fulfil its duties; this is a very important office. It is thought his successor will be President de Mesme, or M. de Maison; the King has not yet determined which.

LETTER CXCII.

TO THE SAME.

Versailles, January 11th, 1712.

It is true the Dauphiness regrets much her youth; there is, however, reason to hope that she will long continue to enjoy the pleasures of this world, for she possesses an inexhaustible fund of gaiety, and if we are fortunate enough to have peace, she is very likely to become very happy. Her great flow of spirits does not deaden her sensibility for misfortune. She has felt very keenly the uncertainty in which the King and Queen of Spain have found themselves; she suffers much on account of her father, and there is not a woman in France more anxious about the happiness of this country than herself; thus she will be naturally delighted when every subject of dispute and uneasiness is removed. In other respects, she has every reason to be satisfied; he is well married, greatly beloved by the King and Dauphin, and in reality constitutes the delight of the court. Some days ago she had an attack of fever; the courtiers were in consternation and loud in proclaiming how irreparable her loss would be. The people are attached to her because she is very accessible; she has the most lovely children that can be

wished for, not so handsome as yours, but very healthy; as graceful as herself, and already showing great talents. This appears to me a tolerably happy condition. If we may judge of the King's life by the present state of his health, there is reason to hope that he may live as long as the Marquis de Mancêra, since their regimen is much the same; there is, as yet, no retrenchments in the general way of living, nor any alteration in his good looks, activity in walking, and general appearance, with which you are acquainted, and which you know to be superior to that of all others whom we have seen.

I have seen with much pleasure the arrival of the powers of the King of Spain: I do not think his interests can be in better hands than those of the King, his grandfather; but as it appertains to the dignity of the Spanish crown to have plenipotentiaries, I shall be very glad to see them, and hope they will soon join our own, since this will lead to a general acknowledgment of the King of Spain, which is certainly as anxiously desired here as at Madrid. The affair of Cordova is very disastrous, and happens at an awkward moment, but there is no appearance of its affecting the general aspect of affairs.

I cannot view without pain Queen Anne's consent to receive Prince Eugene at London; it has frightened me already, but you know my natural timidity.

The young wife of Marshal d'Estrées continues her devotions, and under pretence of her bad health remains at Paris. I do not approve of this, because I think piety should never be opposed to duty; perhaps her afflictions may be greater than we imagine them to be. Cardinal de Noailles has an addition to his troubles, in consequence of the dangerous illness of the Judge de Noailles. I was very much shocked at their having sent orders to Brussels to do no honours to our plenipotentiaries; but I learn that this order came from the Emperor, and that the Dutch, on their side, have sent to require that the usual honours may be paid them. You will hear of a little adventure that has taken place at the Duchess de Berri's, which gives considerable pain to Madame and the Duchess of Orleans; it is hoped that some change will take place in a person of her early years. Why do you speak to me of respectful attachment? Is it not with a view of mocking me? You only owe me a little friendship for the sentiments which I entertain towards you. I am but little disposed to send you compliments upon the new year, it is a custom which has always been so irksome to me, that I can readily dispense with it: if, however, it be a duty in Spain, I beg of you humbly to present my respects to the King and Queen, and to believe that I shall esteem and love you as long as I live; I do not think this shows any want of respect.

LETTER CXCIIL.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, January 17th, 1712.

You are too good to pay so much attention to infirmities which often prevent me from doing all that I could wish. I well recollect the subject of the long letter which I projected; but I do not think, however, that I dwelt long enough upon the impossibility which I found of making a bad use of your letters. I never saw any so mild, polite, and obliging towards everybody; you commend all that can be commended, you excuse all that can be excused, you are silent upon what is blameable; in fact, it is only myself who can lose anything by what will be found in these letters, often full of reproaches on my bad politics, want of resolution, and a thousand other reflections about my disposition to be sorrowful. It is true, also, that there are other passages which would do me honour, by the marks of esteem and friendship you have been pleased to express. But you have these letters, Madam, such as they came into my hands. I no longer possess them, and you never would have had them if I were younger, and had any other prospect in view than that of death. This is a strange expression for a person

who hopes for peace ; I do not look for it with less joy ; having desired it for many others as well as myself, I shall be well pleased to leave it to them. According to all appearance we shall keep your plenipotentiaries for a long time ; we are threatened with tedious negotiations ; however, if Queen Anne continues to press and to be pressed, matters may go on faster than is expected. They are beginning to annoy M. de Marlborough with certain official forms. An account is required of all the money that has passed through his hands ; he has given a good account of himself as yet ; we must wait for the sequel.

To-morrow we go to Marly for a fortnight. It appears that a report is circulating, which states that the Emperor is about to name plenipotentiaries ; this will be a sign of his getting into better humour, for till now it was said that he threatened us with a hundred and sixty thousand men. In spite of all my hopes, I am far from being at my ease, in consequence of Queen Anne having sent a yacht to convey Prince Eugene to London. I do not like to hear of his being with Marlborough, discontented, in the midst of a nation so prone to revolution. I think, however, we shall have peace, and what I have just told you is only the result of my natural timidity.

How I could have wished you to have seen our Dauphiness yesterday, in a dress of white satin, embroidered with black silk ; her hair dressed in

the highest style, with large curls ornamented with the most beautiful jewellery of the crown; flesh colour, white, fair and gay! I do assure you she would not have displeased you, and that she appeared truly the paragon, though there were equally fine dresses at court.

LETTER CXCIV,

TO THE SAME.

Marly, January 25th, 1712.

Queen Anne conducts herself as if she thought herself the arbitress. You know the particulars better than myself; but everything that is passing confirms our hopes of peace. We shall have, according to all appearances, a glorious one; a peace which will unite a great monarchy to the French dynasty, a peace which will constitute the happiness of their Catholic Majesties; could we have expected this, and that it would come to us through Queen Anne? But as I am not destined for joy, the affairs of the church afflict me, and those of Cardinal de Noailles, with the King, become more and more embroiled, which makes me anticipate a disgrace, to which I am by no means indifferent. You may depend upon it there will not be a line of your writing found in my possession; I burn your letters the moment

after I have answered them. I should not have confided them to the Duke de Noailles, if I had not been aware how much they redound to your honour and reputation; I had this complaisance for him, because I know he is fond of great personages, and that you certainly perform the part of one, which is not only very important, but glorious for our sex.

I doubt very much whether the King will like the gardens he is making, if it be necessary to descend and ascend a hundred and sixty-six steps. We approve of the Queen passing her confinement at the Retiro: I do not know whether they will think so at Madrid; but it is very just that the masters should have their will sometimes.

I am very glad to hear what the King intends doing for the Duchess of Alba; she deserves your kindness; and I am not astonished to see you protect an unfortunate woman, who was entitled, both by her birth and excellent qualities, to a better fate.

But for the sad affair of the Noailles, I should assume a more cheerful style in my letters, for I feel our joy and yours. The Dauphiness, who only sought to be gay, is transported with her hopes, and I do not know if Queen Anne feel more heartily rejoiced than the Queen of Spain.

We saw their Britannic Majesties here three days ago; the King very weakly, unable to take

supper or enjoy anything, the Queen in perfect health, the Princess tall and well formed, and taking delight in everything around her. It is said that the bad roads have retarded the arrival of our plenipotentiaries; their letters are about to become interesting; I am already warned not to be one of the first to be alarmed. The last news from England mentions that Prince Eugene had landed, but had not yet reached London.

I have already often asked you what subject you would prefer me to treat of in my letters; but you have, as yet, never replied to me on this point. I shall therefore close the present much sooner than I could have wished.

LETTER CXCIV.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, February 1st, 1712.

You do well to try to amuse their Catholic Majesties; they have had affairs of such an important nature upon their hands, that they require recreation, and I know nothing more innocent than those representations of dramatic compositions which are full of virtuous maxims, generosity, and fidelity; they are proper both for kings and subjects, and ought equally to instruct

every class of society : the great thus learn that which dare not otherwise be told them ; individuals recognise their own vices, passions, and interests. You may judge after this whether I could despise M. de Bonac for opening a theatre, which is only intended to amuse your Kings ; on the contrary, I think much more highly of him than those who stake their all upon a card ; but people think differently here.

LETTER CXCVI.

TO THE SAME.

Versailles, February 7th, 1712.

I AGREE with you, that affection, gratitude, and decorum ought to incline his Catholic Majesty to put an entire confidence in the King, his grandfather ; this will be the best and the shortest way to peace. The news received from England yesterday strengthens our hopes more and more. Queen Anne appears to be very firm ; she received Prince Eugene coldly, and he will not be there long. But you doubtless know this already, or according to all appearances, you have the same news as ourselves, and perhaps even better. The Dauphiness, after having taken a fourth dose of opium, chewed and smoked tobacco, finds

herself a little better. I have this moment heard that she has slept for an hour, and is expected to have a good night.

LETTER CXCVII.

MADEMOISELLE D'AUMALE.

TO THE SAME.

Marly, February, 14th, 1712.

By what a melancholy and fatal event I renew my correspondence with you! And what pleasure would it not afford me, if my aunt had given me this commission for another topic! I cannot describe to you the state in which we are here, and though I were able to do so, I should not wish to assume the painful task: the fact itself is more than enough to distress you, knowing as I do the sensibility of your heart, your attachment to the King, and your friendship for my aunt. You have, moreover, to sustain the affliction of the Queen, who has lost a sister so worthy of her. I think it is not possible to praise them both in a more dignified or just manner, than by this comparison. All is dead here, life has fled from us: our lost Princess was the soul of everything, and delighted us all; we are as yet stupified and confounded with our loss, and every day can only tend to make it felt more acutely. It is impossible to see the King or think of him, without being filled

with despair, and in continual alarms for his health. As for my aunt, it is not possible for me to speak of her, except to obey her commands; she cannot have the honour of writing to you, and you may easily conceive it. She will speak to M. Clement; but some of your letters must have miscarried, as your last communication says that you had written for a nurse, and it is the first time she has heard anything about this circumstance.

LETTER CXCVIII.

TO THE SAME.

Versailles, March 7th, 1712.

I EXPECTED to have received by this post your first letters, in reply to mine, concerning the heavy calamities which have befallen us. You now know the death of the Dauphiness, and perhaps of the Dauphin; and I have to inform you to-day that the Duke d'Anjou has got the measles. The King is, however, very well.

The family of the Noailles ought no longer to be envied: the Duke de Noailles has had a slight attack of apoplexy, and is going to set out for Bourbon. I have been speaking this morning to Marshal de Villeroy, who has recovered the King's favour.

LETTER CXCIX.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, March 14th, 1712.

WE are not as yet at the end of our misfortunes; you ere this know the Dauphin's death, and will soon learn that of the Duke of Brittany; you may easily conceive into what a state the King and all the court are thrown. The Duke of Anjou, now Dauphin, appears saved from the measles; but he has still many teeth to cut. You know as well as I the situation in which the royal family finds itself, and how much our enemies will endeavour to profit by it. I conjure you to tell their Catholic Majesties how deeply I am affected with their grief, and of the impossibility of my addressing them.

The death of the Dauphiness has affected everybody; that of the Dauphin has been overwhelming. The Duke of Brittany's loss gives rise to various conjectures, and dismal forebodings. I yesterday wrote again to Clement, to tell him that you ordered me to decide, and my decision was, that he should choose the fittest person in Paris as a nurse, and that he should take her with him as soon as possible; that I had undertaken to

speak to all the ladies who had recommended them, being well assured, that they would not wish to send one in opposition to him who was to act with her. However, I learn that the Queen is only in the sixth month of her pregnancy; thus you have plenty of time, though it will not prevent me from pressing the assistance of which you stand in need.

LETTER CC.

TO THE SAME.

Versailles, March 17th, 1712.

THE Duchess of Alba brought me your letter yesterday, and handed it to me very secretly, when my room was very full of company: I could not peruse it without shedding many tears, as I easily conceive the grief of their Majesties at the loss of the Dauphin. They know by this time of a third loss, which they will feel less sensibly, but which is still of great consequence. You cannot imagine the state of the court, nor is there less sorrow at present than there was a month ago. Poor Madame de Ventadour is inconsolable, and to complete her affliction, she hears it insinuated that it would be desirable for the child which remains to us, to share the same fate as his brother.

I was yesterday evening on the point of telling the King what has passed in your mind respecting Cardinal Gualterio; but, after much reflection, I thought it would be better not to mention it; the King would have communicated it to his ministers, who would have been displeased with you, and perhaps have published it; nor would our great lords have been obliged to you; and I do not wish you to be feared. As to the affair itself, it appeared to me that Cardinals could not be approved of in a council of Regency, and I think there would be still greater repugnance to admitting a foreigner; in other respects, he whom you propose is highly esteemed, and a favourite with the King and the whole court. His Majesty appears to be extremely well satisfied with Cardinal de la Tremoille; but in whatever way things may turn out, I conjure you to look upon me as a woman incapable of managing public affairs, and who has heard them talked of too late in life, to possess any talents in such matters,—but above all, one who hates them still more on account of her ignorance. I am not regularly consulted, and can assure you that my influence diminishes daily. I am now seventy-five years old, and it appears to me that I have only to prepare for death. You will, therefore, not be astonished that my ideas are a little serious. If I have formed an incorrect judgment of Cardinal Gualterio, there will always be time to retract.

LETTER CCI. ^{IS}

TO THE SAME.

Versailles, March 27th, 1712.

I AM truly sad: never had any one more cause to be so; but the court is as wretched as myself; all is blank and void; there is no longer any joy or occupation. The King exerts himself as much as possible to forget his griefs, but always relapses into his first sorrows; he confides them to me, and you may well conceive how much they add to my own sufferings: however, his health continues good, and he attends to all his duties. Our little Dauphin lives in spite of everything; I have not as yet had courage enough to see him; I should, however, have suffered less for him than the one we have lost, for he resembled the Dauphiness in every respect. I have sent your letter to Marshal de Villeroi: he seldom leaves the court. Count de Brionne is dying; it is a long time since he had retired from the world. Mademoiselle d'Armagne is not on duty. Madame de Cailus has left the palace on a suspicion of the measles, for it has not yet declared itself: she took an emetic yesterday, as that is now the usual medicine of precaution. The Duchess de Lude has brought

me a great number of letters from Piedmont, where the court is said to be in a state of great affliction. We hope for peace, but we cannot flatter ourselves that the campaign will not commence; and this would be a source of fresh troubles for me. Marshal de Tallard is rejoiced at being made a Duke; he is about to be married, but it is not said to whom. The Duke de Guiche has obtained the reversion of the government of Béarn.

I have but little news, and live at Saint Cyr more than ever, in order to conceal myself from the world; but though here, those who are most afflicted join me, and the day passes in weeping; it is, however, highly necessary to betray less grief before the King, for the sake of his health. My dejection does not prevent me from being sensible of all your kindnesses.

LETTER CCII.

TO THE SAME.

Marly, April 11th, 1712.

I AGREE with you that my letters are much more brief than they were formerly. I know fewer trifles than ever, and I naturally feel less inclined to communicate them.

The state of affairs is so pressing, important, and difficult, that one can think of nothing else; however, they must not be spoken of. I am thus reduced to wait for events, though I do not think any one on earth feels a deeper interest in what is passing than myself.

I have never expected peace till now: but it appears to me that our misfortunes render it more difficult, and that the negociation will at least be longer; another campaign must be tried, and I have good reasons for fearing the result.

What would I not give to see you here for a week, that you might judge for yourself, whether France has occasion for peace, and if there is any discouragement and weakness in desiring it! I have not yet seen our young Dauphin, and have scarcely an inclination to do so, when I hear everybody saying that he greatly resembles the Dauphiness, which was not the case formerly; the eldest boy was quite her portrait.

The Duchess de Lude has entreated the King to allow her to retain her apartments at Versailles, her intention being to go there whenever he is on the spot, but to discontinue her visits to Marly, Fontainebleau, or every other place.

Our misfortunes have redoubled the zeal and attachment of every one for the King: his health is the only topic; all eyes are directed towards him, and there is not a letter received which does not make inquiries of condolence.

Marshal de Villeroi is here ; he has suffered so much from the gout, that it is said he is going to put himself upon a milk diet ; still I think he will no longer be deficient in assiduity, except when he is forced to relax.

Monsieur and Madame de Berri exert their utmost to assemble the court ; but everything is still languid, and no person has recovered from the losses we have lately experienced.

The King of England's small-pox goes on favourably ; we shall not see the Queen so soon, as she does not quit him. I should be very sorry for you to know the state in which I am, you would despise me greatly ; I am, however, astonished at my fortitude, and still more at my health.

LETTER CCIII.

TO THE SAME.

Marly, April 18th, 1712.

If to-day's letter is not long, it is not for want of matter ; there never was any more pressing or important, but it is not for me to touch on the subject. I pray that God may support their Catholic Majesties ! Our enemies begin to assemble already, while Prince Eugene is violently

opposed to peace. I found yesterday evening on returning from Saint Cyr, that all our general officers were taking their leave: there is nobody here to-day; all go to Saint Denis to attend the funeral service of our Princes, and the vault will receive three bodies in one day, of which the oldest had only attained twenty-nine years! It will be as well to change this mournful subject.

I think that the Marquis de Torcy will send the paper which was found in the casket of the Dauphin to the King of Spain. The preface will make known the subject; the silence observed here, with respect to it, clearly proves the extent of the Jansenist party; the author is of sufficient importance for the work to be spoken of, if it did not offend all those who are concerned.

Marshal de Villeroi is here, much occupied with public affairs, and very assiduous about the person of his master. It is not true that the Abbé de Polignac is recalled; our plenipotentiaries never appeared more united; there is not a breath of the slightest complaint, but I do not answer for their hearts.

LETTER CCIV.

TO THE SAME.

Marly, April 24th, 1712.

PERFECTION has always been rare, and this is the reason why so few people think like you, or explain themselves with candour: I cannot do so, however, with respect to the affair of the Dauphin, which would require the room at Marly, where I derived such a pleasure from conversing with you. But all my joys are past, and I can have no more, even when peace, which I wish ardently, is made, because if it does not take place we shall be still worse off than we are.

I spent yesterday afternoon in a manner very suitable to my present situation. I had the honour of passing two hours with the Queen of England, who is the very image of desolation. The Princess had become her friend and only consolation. The French at Saint Germain are as disconsolate at her loss as the English, and indeed all who knew her loved her most sincerely. She was truly amiable, cheerful, affable, anxious to please; attached to her duties, and fulfilling them all without a murmur, docile to her governess as at the age of six, having a real affection for the

Queen, her mother; her chief happiness consists in pleasing her; she was affectionately devoted to the King, her brother, and thought only of preventing his leaving the Queen, which he is sometimes apt to do in his little court; it was in the exercise of these virtues, that God has taken her to himself. I found the Queen very much changed; she told me she thought she should also die soon; they had not yet dared to mention the death of the Princess to the King, her brother, he being in too weak a state after his late sickness, which was very severe. If he quits Saint Germain, the Queen will go and remain at Challot, where God has not left her a single nun to whom she can speak.

No one wishes to doubt of peace; and as for myself, I cannot take courage from the length of the negociations which must take place, and during which interval, Prince Eugene will omit nothing to render our situation still worse than it is.

I am very much surprised that after your illness you should think of observing lent. M. Fagon, whom you esteem, would have some difficulty in agreeing that oysters were very healthy, or that they generated good blood, although it be true that their salt aids digestion. I shall abstain from communicating to the King your reasonings upon this subject, for he would certainly take advantage of them; for my own part,

I think everything is good in small quantities, and only bad by the excesses in which we indulge.

LETTER CCV.

TO THE SAME.

Versailles, May 1st, 1712.

I CONCEIVE it is a great relief to you, to be able to administer all the assistance of which the Queen has occasion. Heaven grant her a healthy and well-formed child ! If the tumour does not disappear, I am quite convinced that the waters of Bareges would produce the desired effect. I have seen miracles performed by them, and they cannot do any harm.

I could wish with all my heart that you might celebrate the wedding of which you speak, but the situation of affairs is, as you say, so hard and pressing, that it is difficult to amuse ourselves with such thoughts. I hope God will inspire his Catholic Majesty with what is best. I dare not enter into such matters, although, as I have already said, there is nobody who feels a more lively interest in them than I do.

Although Queen Anne stands very well with me, and we have reason to believe she wishes

for peace as well as ourselves, I cannot bear the idea of her suffering the campaign to commence, and thus expose the lives of so many people.

The greatest news comes from you at present. It is to be lamented that distance renders the negotiations so long and tedious.

LETTER CCVI.

TO THE SAME.

Versailles, May 9th, 1712.

It is true that the affairs now in deliberation are very important, and you may easily conceive that I am much agitated. I cannot comprehend how my affection for their Catholic Majesties could be increased. I should be much more ready to find an opportunity of blaming their conduct, if respect permitted it. The length of the negotiations makes me tremble for peace.

The enemy is making great preparation in Flanders, and though something was to be undertaken on his arrival, yet nothing has been done; but I cannot think Prince Eugene inactive, or not doing all that he can to embarrass our affairs. I am so taken up with our situation, that I have not courage enough to dwell on anything else; and not daring to open my heart, I

must be satisfied, in assuring you that it is full of esteem and respect for you.

LETTER CCVII.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, May 15th, 1712.

OUR King is certainly very much afflicted at the troubles of the church ; his religion is sincere, and he regards these concerns as still more important than those of the world. The Queen of England is inconsolable for the death of the Princess. I do not think there ever was one in France so much regretted as the Dauphiness ; I could now wish that the King had loved her less. The Dauphin is not well, but I dare say you have been already apprised of this. It is true that the King's health continues good ; but not so with my own, as you have been informed ; I entertain the highest esteem for the Princess de Vaudemont, who has, from her youth, shown me great friendship ; when I see her, she recalls ideas to my mind which are much more agreeable than those of the present day ; she says I still possess some vivacity, but I assure you that I am almost dead in everything else that concerns life.

We constantly expect news from England, which it is said will be decisive. How happy are you, Madam, to join to the capacity of a great minister, the tranquillity of a philosopher, and how far am I removed from both the one and the other !

LETTER CCVIII.

TO THE SAME.

Versailles, May 23rd, 1712.

ALTHOUGH I have received nothing from you this post, I cannot help writing, being constantly occupied with what is passing where you are, and which appears to me to be worth the trouble. The hours and moments of our last courier are counted ; and as to myself, who always view things a little more gloomily than others, I think I already see the answer he will bring, for in short we must have an answer and peace afterwards. You may easily conceive that having my brain filled with such ideas, I am not fit to entertain you with the parties of pleasure which the Duchess often makes to Rambouillet, nor of the hunting excursions in which the Duchess de Berri joins the King. She does well to show him these attentions, but, as yet, they are not agreeably received ; more time is necessary to become ac-

customed to them. Poor Marshal de Villeroi is in a state of constant suffering; I am quite grieved for him, and at what the King loses by being deprived of the society of a man, who knows how to answer him better than anybody else. The Count de Toulouse wishes to attempt an accommodation of the law suits between the Princesses. The Duke of Maine will not be difficult to manage; it is said that several marriages are in agitation. Notwithstanding her deformity, it is whispered that Mademoiselle de Conti does not displease the Duke, and the temper of this Princess, her wit, sense, affability and goodness, compensate for every defect; on the other hand, the difference of age between Mademoiselle de Bourbon and the Prince de Conti is not sufficiently great to prevent this marriage.

LETTER CCIX.

TO THE SAME.

Versailles, May 30th, 1712.

I RECEIVE no news from you this post; but I have answered two of your letters, one of the 9th, and the other of the 16th instant.

It is true that what now passes is of a very serious nature, and even something beyond that; I am well convinced that you will adhere to your

first views, and that the delays which we oppose to the peace will be productive of no good : we must leave all to God, and be guided by him. It is some time since I saw the Queen of England, but I know that she is still inconsolable. Why do you think that the King, her son, will always be unfortunate ? I see many persons who are persuaded that he will be restored.

We wish a happy confinement to the Queen. The Duchess de Saint Pierre, who is here, confirms all the news we hear of her, and consoles us by the assurance that her tumour is small. What she says of her Majesty's dress pleases everybody, and makes her more respectable in their eyes than the magnificence which would so well become her. I am very sorry that you lose a good woman, for they are extremely scarce everywhere.

The court is quite solitary : all the Princesses, and the greatest part of the ladies, have taken a fancy to small country houses, which they visit with those who are fortunate enough to be most in their good graces, and which renders the court less agreeable : but it may be rather more cheerful at Fontainebleau, for I hope the campaign will not be long.

LETTER CCX.

TO THE SAME.

Marly, June 13th, 1712.

THOUGH I hope for peace, and a speedy one, I am in a very bad humour, for we hear of Quesnoy being invested, and the enemy making an incursion into France; this is an incident of little consequence, but it will terrify Paris, consequently money will disappear for some days. I hope we shall soon be relieved from this anxiety by the news which we expect from England, and which we ought to receive this week.

It is useless to say what one thinks upon the resolution which their Catholic Majesties have taken: we must be content with what God wills; but they should not be displeased with the French for acting with respect to them as they do. The Duchess de Berri is passionately fond of hunting, and neglects no opportunity of indulging in this amusement: till now her suit is not numerous. The King has not yet been able to prevail on himself to take her into his carriage; but time will settle everything, though I have never seen grief continued so long at court; we must no longer think of what might have cured it, and I perfectly comprehend your reasons.

The affairs of the church do not mend, and I

have nothing good to tell you, except that the King's health is as we could wish it. I trembled for two days respecting that of M. Fagon, who is so necessary to us.

LETTER CCXI.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, June 26th, 1712.

I AM delighted at the favourable state of the Queen; and though I look upon Spain now with emotions of envy, I do not fail to wish you all sort of blessings.

No, Madam, there is nothing disobliging in the expression of my sentiments towards you; but I have no longer the strength to talk to you upon all these matters; we must suffer ourselves to be guided by God; he has placed us in a situation which we could not foresee, and will extricate us from it whenever he pleases.

I can easily recognise the conversations of our court when you are thought too eager; they still continue, and become even more ill-natured; but we have, as you observe, only to do the best we can, and let the world say what it likes.

The King was very much concerned at the death of M. de Vendome. You may easily con-

ceive there is a great stir about his property, but nothing has yet been decided on this subject.

The last news from England gives rise to the expectation of a speedy peace with that country; it remains to be seen whether the Dutch will persist in their haughty pretensions, and if we shall still have war. The King and Dauphin are in perfect health. I have not spirits enough to speak to you of trifles.

LETTER CCXII.

TO THE SAME.

Marly, July 11th, 1712.

PEACE is a great blessing: we are therefore obliged to wait patiently for its arrival. No person has doubted its attainment with England; the Queen has announced it loudly to her subjects; they have made bonfires on the certainty of its taking place, but we do not see it yet concluded. Quesnoy is taken, and Prince Eugene wishes to attack two or three other places at once. M. de Stafford should be now with the army, to induce the troops who are in the pay of the Queen to follow the example of the English; this is the news which we expect at present, and which awakens me earlier than usual.

It is in vain, Madam, I cannot rejoice at the re-

nunciation of their Catholic Majesties, and if I take comfort, it is for reasons of which I dare not boast to you. God will do what he pleases: I should not feel any great interest in passing events if I loved France less, and did not esteem their Catholic Majesties as I do.

I form to myself a very agreeable idea of the Queen holding your infant in her arms; this is certainly a recreation with which she will never be reproached, and which is as amiable as all the rest of her conduct.

The King and Queen of England come here to-day, to take their leave, for we set out the day after to-morrow; they thought of going away before us, but everything proceeds very slowly. The Dauphin will also come to-day; he is not very delicately nursed, being generally in the open air; his last tooth troubles him a little, but in other respects he is very well. As for the King's health, it is not, thank God, affected; he orders his dinner sometimes to be brought to my house; it is some time since I had the honour of being at table with him, but I see with pleasure that he eats rather less; it is said, indeed, that he eats more heartily at supper, which is a strange regimen. Your Marshal de Villeroi is the most contented man breathing; I sincerely hope this disposition may last a long time.

Count de Broglio has beaten the enemy in a foraging excursion, but this is of little consequence.

Clement's conversation is very entertaining, and all she says of your court increases our respect and love towards it. I always fear M. de Stharemberg, and I wish you as much tranquillity as ourselves. You have, however, a great resource in your prudence and good temper.

LETTER CCXIII.

TO THE SAME.

Fontainebleau, July 18th, 1712.

WE receive no news about peace but what is good, and I know no person who does not believe we shall conclude it with England immediately, and that a general peace will take place this year; but the proceedings are so slow, that sanguine minds have a great deal to suffer.

It is said that we shall know to-morrow the nature of the truce; it is thought that the troops in the pay of the Queen will follow the example of the English; there is reason to hope that the Dutch will agree to a general suspension, which would be a good thing, and in that case, I should have patience during the negociations of Utrecht.

I have no difficulty in believing that what the King had declared in his council, was followed by

a very heroic and affecting scene ; our time has furnished such as would be thought too fabulous for a romance.

I witnessed, some days ago, the parting of our King and his Britannic Majesty. The former expressed himself in an admirable manner upon friendship, on the services which he will ever be ready to render him when in his power, concluding by an exhortation to fidelity in religion, and an estrangement from innovation ; a great King is an excellent preacher. The King of England made very apposite replies upon all these subjects, and recommended the Queen, his mother, to the King in a most affectionate manner. This Prince is very sensible, and much more so than his age would indicate. The Queen, on her side, said all that could be said as to their gratitude to the King, and on her submission to the will of God. Her dejection is such as to excite pity in the most obdurate heart.

What an agreeable idea you wish to give me, in flattering me with the thought of seeing the Queen of Spain at Marly ! If she were obliged to come to Bareges, I would risk, even at my age, a journey to Bourdeaux ; but how many reasons, and what obstacles would oppose this project ; that of your two Princes is of great importance.

Marshal de Villeroi is quite contented ; you may conceive from this how he is treated, for you know that his delicacy is not easily satisfied. I have not

seen him for some time ; it is not easy for him to have access to me ; the King is a great deal with me, and I like to be alone when I am at my own disposal.

I no longer speak of the renunciation, but I think nothing can be more imprudent than to hold conversations about it, as we do here ; but, like others, I also have my opinions, and there cannot be two on the above point, from the cabinet to the market-place.

The court is not yet full here ; there is a great deal of hunting, and it is the finest weather imaginable.

LETTER CCXIV.

TO THE SAME.

Fontainebleau, July 25th, 1712.

WE are upon the point of losing Landrecies, and never has the war pressed so close upon us as since it has been thought that peace was made. I know nothing equal to the furious outcry so long kept up against Marshal de Villars for his not giving battle, except that of the present moment, for his wishing to do so in order to save Landrecies. It could not be imagined that the sovereigns had occasion for the patience which they possess, for I believe that all the courts re-

semble each other, and that there is an outcry everywhere against what is passing. After all this noise, I do not think there will be an action; the enemy has had time to entrench himself.

The court devises every means to forget its afflictions; the courtiers play, hunt, and walk night and day; but this is not natural, time alone can work the grand cure.

LETTER CCXV.

TO THE SAME.

Fontainebleau, August 7th, 1712.

I HAVE received no letters from you on the days that I have been accustomed to receive them, and I waited on Saturday, Sunday, and Monday to have the pleasure of writing to you; but your letter did not come till Tuesday morning, when the post had set out; I do not know whose fault this is.

Since that time you will have received, and continue to receive, good news from Flanders: the joy is great at Paris. I have also experienced some pleasure, but it has not lasted long, for the siege of Douay gives me great uneasiness; having to deal with a man who appeared enraged when he was fortunate, what will he not attempt now that he is spurred on? I would fain hope for

peace with all the sober heads who do not doubt it, but I find the negociations very tardy: I am assured that you are better informed of their progress than myself. It is the same with the actions that have taken place in Flanders, of which you receive the particulars, and in this supposition I scarcely know how to fill up my letters. I am entirely ignorant of what is passing at our court, since I lost her who induced me to pay attention to everything on her account; I am anxious for the general good, but I no longer know what is doing. I was told yesterday evening, on my returning from a house which I have in the city, and where I go as often as possible to avoid seeing anybody, that M. le Duc had gone to the army without the King's permission, or the consent of the Duchess. This courage is worthy of his rank; but his eyes are in so bad a state that I think he should not be suffered to expose himself.

You are cruel in wishing me to be attached to their Catholic Majesties, at the same time that you do not wish to give them to us. My age ought to console me for every thing with respect to myself, and my experience shows me that there is little dependence upon the future, that things turn out very different from what we anticipate.

I had already heard of your procession to the Retiro; it must have been full of magnificence and pleasure. It is vain to expect any more cheerfulness in my letters, since what has passed in

Flanders does not afford me any, and I am already thrown into a state of great uneasiness about Douay and the slowness of the negociations.

LETTER CCXVI.

TO THE SAME.

Fontainebleau, August 15th, 1712.

TILL now the troops which are in the pay of Queen Anne have not followed the example of the English, and it does not as yet appear that this Princess is offended at all that the Dutch do and say against her: she acts ably, and without passion; her whole conduct shows great consideration of her allies. Prince Eugene is exasperated at what has passed in Flanders; he will attempt the relief of Douay, if he is permitted; but it is reported from all quarters that the Dutch will not commit themselves upon a doubtful event, and which would be favourable to us, if we could depend upon our superiority.

In the meantime Queen Anne has sent Viscount Bolingbroke, accompanied by Messrs. Prior and Gautier, most likely to forward the peace, which is the only thought that gives me pleasure, if the repose of nations can be so called; for, with respect to myself, I should suffer little from war but by my anxieties, and shall perhaps gain little from

tranquillity; I shall merely change sufferings: we must have them while in this state of being. You will say that I anticipate misfortunes, and that my thoughts are too gloomy; but who can have any that are too much so? I should not even see your Queen with pleasure at Marly, if she must leave it again. Enjoy your happiness, which I hope may long continue. Although Madame Compoin has appeared to me of a taciturn character, I shall endeavour to have a conversation with her to hear her speak of your court, which occupies me, at least, as much as our own.

As I only aspire to peace, I am sorry for the siege of Douay, in the fear that we shall lose lives which may afflict us. M. le Duc arrived there in such a state, with respect to his eyes, as to render him very unfit for warlike pursuits.

The Elector of Bavaria is at Chaillot, and is expected here in a few days; it is a very disagreeable place in peace, and quite displeasing to the King, having a great regard for this Prince, who is, on his part, very much attached to the royal family. He has been really very much affected by its losses.

All Paris will have it that the revolution in our affairs in Flanders is an effect of the Dauphin's protection, so much are they persuaded of his sanctity!

There is a chamberlain of the Pope here, who says, that if he wrote to Rome, to say that the

King of France, at seventy-four, goes out in the dog-days, at two o'clock in the afternoon, runs through the forest, among the sand, in the midst of all the horses and dogs, they would think him mad, and that, consequently, he will take care to say nothing about it. The King's health is, indeed, astonishing; he was never so attentively observed, and since our misfortunes he is become still more precious.

The trenches were to open before Douay on the 14th instant; I hope it will not hold out long, having a weak garrison; but I fear some attempt on the part of Prince Eugene.

LETTER CCXVII.

TO THE SAME.

Versailles, August 22nd, 1712.

I HAVE no letter from you this post, and I know not with what I shall fill mine. The arrival of M. de Bolingbroke furnishes, however, news enough, but M. de Torcy will inform you of it better than I can; there is also no want of news from Flanders, of which you are doubtless informed; I should, therefore, have none to communicate but what is passing at court, and of this I now know but little. I think we are upon the eve of peace, at least with England and Savoy. It is

only you who can cause some delay by the inevitable length of a negociation carried on by letters, which cannot be answered in less than three weeks. The change in our warlike affairs does not intoxicate me; I am not, however, the less anxious for a general peace; and as everything which postpones might break it off, I am impatient to see it concluded. The siege of Douay goes on very well; but I still dread Prince Eugene, who is very near us, and who never entertained but one thought, that of beating us. Marshal de Villars, in the midst of all he has to do, and the good fortune he has just had, loses a beloved brother; at least we heard yesterday that he was at the point of death. There is a great deal of sickness amongst our officers. I hope we shall return to Versailles on the 14th of September; I shall be very glad to draw near St. Cyr, where I never felt more anxious to seclude myself.

LETTER CCXVIII.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, October 2nd, 1712.

YOUR visit to Bagnères makes a great noise, and as our courtiers do not think anything can be done without mystery and disguise, they are try

ing to discover your secret. Some say that you are coming to court; others, that it is a prelude to the disgrace of their Catholic Majesties; others, again, attribute it to an inclination for retirement; while a fourth party declare it to have originated in a serious malady. For my own part, I think it an indisposition, of which you fear the consequences, and which you wish to have cured in time, without waiting till the evil becomes greater. I am only uneasy as to the caves of Bagnères, to which I never heard any utility attached, except for the baths. You will, of course, have had the advice of M. Fagon.

Your friend Marshal de Villeroi is very uneasy as to what concerns you, and you ought to be more obliged to him than at another moment, for he is in the zenith of exaltation. The King has given him the reversion of the government of the Lyonnais, the King's lieutenancy, all the pensions attached to it, and accompanied the grants with every mark of friendship which he could wish. We are not, however, better friends, notwithstanding all this; I refuse him audiences, and he strongly opposes my design of secluding myself more than ever.

I passed the time at Fontainebleau in great solitude, which I enjoyed very much, and shall continue it here. I have no motive for showing myself, and have a thousand for concealment. I am old, often sad; tired of the world, knowing courtiers

but too small; and no longer possess that which formerly interested me in everything, except what regards the King's person and the good of his kingdom. There is nothing connected with this subject now, but what affords me pleasure. Everything goes on admirably in Flanders; we heard at Rambouillet of the reduction of Quesnoy. Bouchain is on the point of being besieged. The enemy say they have never attacked us with so much spirit and skill as we attack them. All these sieges have not led to any considerable loss of lives up to the present moment.

There are numbers of sick everywhere, as well as in the army, but few deaths. It is reported that Prince Eugene goes to the play at Mons, and that he says, since he is prevented from doing something, he will amuse himself. Indeed I think his army is inconsiderable; for detachments have been sent into all the fortresses, from their fearing us on every side. Is it possible, Madam, not to recognise the hand of God in such a change? Having humbled and afflicted us, he now raises us up and rejoices us. The Dutch are exasperated against us and England.

LETTER CCXIX.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, October 9th, 1712.

I HAVE received, Madam, the letter which you have done me the honour to write from Pampe-luna, dated on the 22nd of last month : you do me the justice to think that I feel interested in the success of your journey. I am well persuaded that their Catholic Majesties have taken every possible precaution for your safety and convenience, and I know you to possess sufficient good sense to have done all that depended on yourself.

You will not be very indifferently lodged at Bagnères ; we found our house a palace in quitting Bareges : but I fear lest the waters may not render you all the benefit you expect, for there is but little dependence placed on them except for baths.

The Queen certainly gives you a great mark of friendship, by consenting to a separation of three weeks, and the Prince of Asturias was not greatly to blame for wishing to accompany you, as he would have profited largely from your leisure.

Of what use is it for me to be satisfied with their Catholic Majesties, and why do you wish

me to adore a Princess whom I shall never see? She does me the honour to write to me in a manner that would turn the brain of one who calculated more upon the future than I do.

Le Quesnoy is taken, and capitulated on the 4th instant. Bouchain was already invested, and I think the trenches will be opened to-morrow; never was there a more signal miracle, nor a more sudden revolution in the affairs of a country; three months ago we were without courage, troops, ammunition, artillery, or tumbrels; and mere passive spectators of whatever Prince Eugene chose to do: he is at present a spectator in his turn at Mons; nothing more is said of his army, while ours carries everything which it attacks; every day furnishes examples of Roman valour among the lowest ranks, and they contend who shall be the first to march on Bouchain. Our artillery silenced that of Quesnoy, the first day that it fired a shot; we have a great deal of spare ammunition; the army wants nothing, and there are a sufficient number of waggons to convey the fascines that will be wanted; there was not one to be found in the environs of that place, because not a tree was left round the town.

Never was there a more liberal or magnificent establishment than that of the Count de Toulouse, and conducted with such regularity, that nobody appears to suffer the least inconvenience; the house is small, but the park and gardens have been

rendered extremely splendid, by the various improvements made by the Prince. The situation is not good, it is a hunting country, having a very large forest near to it. The furniture, made at Saint Joseph, is very beautiful, and full of the taste of her who had begun to prepare it: the King was much pleased during his stay there, and may very probably return to it again. For my own part, I passed my time there as usual, and saw but few of the company; among whom I shall only name Madame de Dangeau, de Caylus, and d'O.; for Madame de Lévi, who belongs to my coterie, has scarcely recovered from her confinement, and the Duchess de Noailles is pregnant.

LETTER CCXX.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, October 18th, 1712.

I WISH with all my heart that you may recover your health at Bagnères; I am not surprised that the journey has done you more good than harm: persons oppressed with cares and public affairs take their repose better by quitting them, than remaining exposed to a whole court.

You will soon hear of the capture of Bouchain; the news of yesterday evening stated that the

firing had almost ceased; it is time to finish the campaign; our troops have suffered in the trenches at Bouchain, having been up to the middle in water; but at last the affair has terminated to our utmost satisfaction. The general appears to be in an excellent humour from his letters, and very impatient to come and enjoy the fruits of his labours: he will not, however, find people very generous here; and if he was envied when unfortunate, conceive what will be the case now that it must be allowed he is covered with glory; but the King, and those who are unprejudiced, will receive him with open arms.

All our courtiers will be very glad to be here again, although it may be said there is no longer a court, nor any hope of re-establishing it. The Duchess de Berri is not calculated to bring people together: her days are very irregular, it is impossible to know at what hour she is to be seen; she does not like play, which is, however, necessary for company. The Duke de Berri likes hunting still better than play; he is the best Prince in the world, and resembles his father in every respect.

LETTER CCXXI.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, October 22, 1812.

I AM very much obliged to you for the two letters which you have written to me since your arrival at Bagnères. I am delighted to see you satisfied with your remedies, and quite ready to return to their Catholic Majesties. I shall participate in their joy, yours, and even that of the Prince of Asturias.

Bouchain is taken, and our campaign most gloriously terminated. Yesterday, the King gave the government of Provence to Marshal de Villars; the post of general of the galleys to Marshal de Tessé; the government of Messin to M. de Sailant; that of Gravalines to the Marquis de Broglie, son-in-law of M. Voisin, whose appointments he increases out of compliment to the minister; the government of Charlemont to the Marquis de Vieux Pont, a good officer, and son-in-law of the Princess of Montauban; and of Nismes to M. de Viéru, an old officer, and son-in-law of M. de Saint André. I do not know whether you remember enough of the Hotel d'Albert to recollect this name.

The Duchess of Alba came here yesterday, to pay me her farewell visit, and hopes to set out

next week ; it is a long time since she has so flattered herself with this idea, and she has been displeased at me when I assured her that she would not go so soon. I wonder at her having been able to finish so many disagreeable affairs in a foreign country, and without any assistance. She is very grateful for all the obligations she is under to you. I do not think that the King and Queen of Spain have a more zealous, faithful, or respectful subject ; I hope that the pleasure of being once more at Madrid will console her a little ; she has great need of it ; for she has spent a dismal time since the death of her husband : never did a woman love to such an excess all that she was bound to love, even to the idea of her son being an Adonis, which he certainly was not.

Marshal de Villeroi, a greater grandfather than all the grandfathers put together, has presented, within these few days, all his grandchildren to the King, to take the oaths for their various reversions : the eldest will be short and stout, with a very agreeable physiognomy ; the second is more like the Marshal.

I know not whether we flatter ourselves or not ; but we think peace near at hand. The Dutch have at length entered into the negociations ; there appear few things to discuss. I cannot say at present that my joy will be great ; but I shall be glad to see their Catholic Majesties established upon their thrones, France in repose, at least for

some time, and the King delivered from so many cares and anxieties: there will, after all, be but too many left on his hands; but we are not to have perfect felicity here below.

The court is about to be graced by the arrival of our warriors, who will be very glad to find themselves here in their respective places; I shall be also happy to hear that you are in yours, in which you act so brilliant a part. I wish most heartily that it may be as agreeable, which is not always the case.

LETTER CCXXII.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, October 26th, 1712.

THE waters of Bagnères were created expressly for you, and that is enough to deserve the reputation which I am about trying to give them; for they had none till now, except for the baths.

I told the King how well satisfied you were with your reception in France, and certainly it must have been a pleasing task to all who have contributed to it. Marshal de Villars, who is the most active and firm of your friends, has got his Majesty to explain himself lately on your account, and is so well satisfied, that he had not patience to wait till he paid me a visit, but wrote to me in

terms which are very flattering to you. Feel as much interest, Madam, in his good fortune, as you have done in his disgraces; for he is the most contented man living, and I heartily wish he may long continue so.

LETTER CCXXIII.

TO THE SAME.

Marly, November 20th, 1712.

I AM very anxious to hear of your being at Madrid; and should be much grieved if the use the waters has encreased your complaint, so as to detain you at Bayonne. I could wish to know you were in the presence of the Queen, whose goodness I so much admire. She is kind enough to write me long letters upon all that is passing in Spain, which is gay and brilliant, though not at all to my taste. I see, however, that I am not reasonable, and that in our present situation it must needs be so. I still hope for peace, and our best politicians do not doubt but it will take place; I, however, find the negociations very long, and am in continual alarm lest they should be broken off by some untoward event.

I have a fresh source of trouble in the health of the King: do not be alarmed, however; it is as

good as it ever has been ; but there is a disposition to take the alarm, on the part of some through anxiety, and of others through affection ; there are many, too, who wish to create fears in the public mind. A hundred false reports circulated in Paris, which it has been impossible to tranquilize on the subject, and you will readily perceive the inconvenience of spreading such reports throughout all Europe. As to the King himself, he eats with his usual appetite, sleeps well, takes the same exercise, walks better than ever, because he goes out before meals, and devotes the same portion of time to public business. The government of Guyenne is not yet given away ; but the King has charged it with ten thousand crowns as a pension for the Duchess, whose pecuniary affairs are very much deranged. The King has prolonged his stay ten days, for the pleasure of planting, and to be near the Duchess de Berri, who has been confined to her bed for nine days, from a fall. The Queen of England has suffered greatly from headache, and a sore throat, which is now much better. Your good friend, M. de Villeroi, absents himself too often, to go and preside at the meeting of the Marshals ; I could wish him always near the King, whom he knows how to please better than any one else.

The King has just returned from shooting, and has brought home thirty or forty head of game :

he has never shot so well before. I wish the King of Spain had a park like that of Versailles.

I began this letter yesterday, and I have just received one from you, which informs me of what I was apprehensive might happen, that you have stopped at Bayonne. This is an event that we shall all deplore; for you are wanted near their Catholic Majesties. Every body gains by it; speak no more to me about renunciation, I conjure you: I condemn myself to perpetual silence on that subject; for I should only say harsh things were I to dwell on it, and I do not stand in need of any new cause of uneasiness. I yesterday saw the letter which the King of Spain has written to the Duke de Berri; but, again, let us say no more about the matter.

LETTER CCXXIV.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, November 27th, 1712.

I THINK you will answer my letter at Madrid, and imagine the waters will have at length allowed you to quit Bayonne, where I am sorry you have been detained so long. I can easily believe you were very glad to see the Queen Dowager; but I suppose also, that you would not have wished to see her for twelve days together;

and indeed you have good reasons for being a little impatient: your quiet and amiable temper has been put to the test, by knowing that the Queen is expecting your arrival. I participate largely in her joy and your own; mine must be derived from what is taking place in Spain; for I see nothing in France that is calculated to afford me much pleasure: there is, however, no part of the court in which it appears to exist more than in my room. We have music frequently; for it is the only thing that pleases the King when he is not out. Marshal de Villeroi is to give us some this evening, and I hope that this will introduce it into other parties, which till now has been confined to those of the Count de Toulouse.

To-day the King holds a chapter of the order, to give it to the Duke d'Aumont, which will enable him to appear with more *éclat* in England. I am very impatient to hear of the Duke of Hamilton's arrival here; but as to seeing him, I do not think of it; for, in secluding myself more [than ever from the French, I shall not receive foreigners, although I most highly approve of their being well treated, and exert all my influence for this purpose. The Queen of England could not go to Saint Germain for the last few days, as she had decided; she hopes, however, to be able to go there on Thursday.

LETTER CCXXV.

TO THE SAME.

Versailles, December 5th, 1712.

It is some time since I have received any of your letters; I am very impatient to know that you are arrived at Madrid. Peace is the only thing now spoken of here, and yet I do not see it take place; there are even people who pretend, that, when the great powers shall be agreed, the interests of the minor states will have to undergo a long discussion. A small case was sent to M. d'Oxford, with a note, requesting he would open it himself. He was, however, too much on the alert to do this; and the person whom he employed, instead of opening it in the usual way, took off the bottom, and found several small pistols, which would all have discharged at the same time, and might, it is said, have killed several persons had they been present. This mysterious affair makes a great noise.

The King has given the order to the Duke d'Aumont, to wear it in England. One of my attendants has just informed me that the Duke of Hamilton has fought a duel with Lord Moore, who was killed, and the Duke only survived three hours, having received four wounds. This

is a disastrous circumstance, which may still prolong our negociations ; and, as more considerable obstacles may arise, I am greatly alarmed about this peace, which I desire so ardently, without, however, anticipating any very joyful emotions when it takes place.

The Queen of England was to return to Saint Germain to-day. The King, her son, edifies everybody by the manner in which he hears mass : this Prince possesses excellent qualities, much religion, probity, and good sense ; he is very prudent and sedate ; in other respects, he speaks with a greater accent, and his manners are more foreign than those who have ever left London. M. le Duc and he are so much alike as to be taken for each other. This is entertaining you with trifles, Madam ; conceive, therefore, what I should do if I had the pleasure of conversing with you ; you would then see that those with whom I pass my life have less of my confidence than yourself.

LETTER CCXXVI.

TO THE SAME.

Versailles, December 19th, 1712.

I DID not write to you on Monday last ; for none of your letters reached me, and I had no-

thing to communicate : we were then in continual expectation of M. Prior ; but we now hear he will not come so soon : it is necessary, before he leaves England, that Lord Stafford, who is at the Hague, should send the final resolution of the Dutch, whose deputies are meeting for that purpose : after which M. Prior will bring us a general or separate peace. But, perhaps, you know all better than myself. Madame continues much incommoded ; however, she hopes that the use of sulphur will bring her about. It is said that the Duchess de Berri's court is pretty well attended by the men, but very little by the women ; indolence renders them incapable of discharging their duties, or even of consulting their pleasures.

At last I have seen your friend at our musical party, and I hope not for the last time. The Marquis de Mouchi, a relation of Cardinal de Estrées, who is in the good graces of the Duchess de Berri, was yesterday married to one of her favourites, a grand daughter of the first physician to Monsieur, whom we shall see seated by his side at the repasts of Marly : she is young and handsome, from what I hear ; for I am no longer in the habit of seeing young persons.

I began this letter the day before yesterday, and thinking that some news might arrive, I have not closed it. We have just heard that M. Prior will soon be at Paris, and that our affairs are

about to be arranged. May Heaven bless you in Spain, and grant us patience in France!

LETTER CCXXVII.

TO THE SAME.

Marly, January 16th, 1713.

You easily adopt the manners of France, in speaking of the returns from the chase; I think yours very agreeable, and more moderate than those of Marly; for I confess that we eat too much, are too long at table, and too fond of good living. However, the King has become one of the most abstemious men in his kingdom: the tables of individuals are extravagant; and, notwithstanding the continual complaints of the courtiers about their poverty, there are scarcely any of them who do not keep open house.

Since you know nothing of the peace but what I tell you, I must needs add, that we no longer doubt its taking place; but it is not expected before the month of March, which causes great fear lest events might break off the negotiations.

The English ambassador is to see the King here to-morrow; the Duke d'Aumont received him at Boulogne with great magnificence; he had two hundred gentlemen with him, and more than forty ladies in court dresses.

LETTER CCXXVIII.

TO THE SAME.

Versailles, February 6th, 1713.

PEACE advances, the Dutch have at length entered into the conferences, having given the satisfaction which was demanded, and everybody appears persuaded that the Emperor will also accede to it; what is passing in the north will contribute to his doing so.

The King of Sweden has been a long time my hero, so much so, that I have his portrait. I was charmed with his courage and frugality, as well as with the rule which he observes and causes to be observed relative to women, and his fidelity to his religion; but some cruelties have been imputed to him which disgusted me a little; however, I can easily comprehend that you are anxious to see him, and I doubt not that he will be well treated at your court; at all events, I shall judge of him by the manner in which he is received there.

You are very ill-natured in your project of the journey to Toulouse. You had better talk of the marriage of Mademoiselle de Solve; her mother will give anything to see her well married. Madame de Maillebois is well formed, tall, fair, and

innocent, with a beautiful mouth and fine teeth; she has something of the air of her mother, though not so beautiful. She must imitate Madame de Rupelmonde, who has conducted herself with great propriety at our court, and who manages her concerns very well in Holland. I should regret her in case you induced her to go to Spain, if I still took any interest in what is passing here. It is certain that M. de Pontchartrain gives you many male and female rivals; do not dread Mademoiselle d'Aumale; it is from her choice you would have least cause of jealousy.

LETTER CCXXIX.

TO THE SAME.

Versailles, February 13th, 1713.

THE continuance of the Pope's sickness will occasion the departure of our Cardinals; that is to say, of the Cardinals de Rohan and Polignac, who is not yet however arrived from Utrecht. I doubt not but he is upon as good terms with Cardinal de La Trémoille, as he has been, and I must say, that he deserves every praise; I know also that everything has been done to excite dissension between them.

Mademoiselle de Noailles marries the son of Marshal de Chateau Rhenauld, to whom the

King gives the reversion of the lieutenancy of Brittany. She is not so pretty as her sisters, but she is a very good girl, and greatly beloved by all who know her.

The English ambassadress wishes to see me ; I persist in refusing her ; but this has not been done without some fear of reproaches from you. Will you tell me nothing about the Duchess of Alba ? Has she not yet arrived ? I am very anxious to hear that she is tranquil, and a little more happy, for she suffered much here.

LETTER CCXXX.

TO THE SAME.

Marly, February 27th, 1713.

I AM very glad that the sickness, which prevents you writing to me more fully, has not lasted longer, and that so good a medicine has been administered. You certainly deserve to live, and are not a useless incumbrance on our planet. I can easily conceive that you scold sometimes ; it is impossible to have things in order without reproving those that are irregular. I have often taken the liberty of finding fault with the Duchess de Lude, because she did not scold enough : this lady must be more disagreeable to you than any body else, for you are naturally very mild.

Mademoiselle d'Aumale has communicated to me the letter with which you have honoured her; and you want a distaff?—you shall have everything you ask for, and 'nothing more. I shall take upon me to send you twenty pounds of wool, as many of silk, and the same quantity of flax; you only want samples, for your work will never extend farther.

The affairs in which you interest yourself, your attendance upon their Catholic Majesties, the education of two great Princes, a correspondence with so many people who esteem you, are equal, before God and man, to the merit of managing a distaff.

I am aware of the comfort that is derived from wearing stays; but we must not say any more about this in France. A beautiful and great Princess has put an end to their use for ever; she could not spoil her own shape, but she has spoiled that of others, and we now see nothing but clumsy and short figures.

On crossing the French frontiers, the King of England wrote one of the handsomest letters imaginable to the King; never were terms of respect, gratitude, and submission, more happily tempered with the dignity of a great King. I know of nothing but his restoration, which could give me an inclination to live till the period of its arrival.

The Dauphin came here two days ago, finely

dressed, covered with jewellery, and looking very handsome. The Duchess of Maine contributes very much to the pleasures of Paris, by the plays, balls, and masquerades, which she has lately given with great magnificence. The puppets represent the siege of Douay, the boastings of M. de Villars, and mention all our officers by name. Everybody goes to see them; Marshal de Villars has been there himself, for he enjoys a little raillery. The Duchess de Berri has sent for them to Versailles.

I dare no longer speak of peace; we continue to think ourselves close to it, and yet it eludes our grasp. It is said that to-morrow is the day fixed for Queen Anne to declare herself to parliament, and that we shall hear the result on Saturday.

LETTER CCXXXI.

TO THE SAME.

Versailles, March 6th, 1713.

Nothing more is said of the feebleness of the Archduke. I thought his health had been re-established. We are waiting for the news of what the Queen shall have said to her parliament. It is thought here, there will be no campaign. The officers and young men can scarcely be more disorderly during peace than they have been during the war; but, Madam, they do not take so much

snuff as the ladies, who are quite disgraced by it, and now carry coloured handkerchiefs in their pockets. I cannot habituate myself to what I see, and I therefore avoid seeing it as much as possible.

Notwithstanding my seclusion, I cannot refuse particular interviews with persons whom I have some reasons for noticing; I have had one to-day with Madame de Pompadour, to whom all this kind of thing is new, and by which she is also much alarmed. I have also seen the widow of Marshal de Boufflers, who lives in great retirement; she left me to go to Paris, where her only son is confined with a fever. She thinks it will end in the small-pox.

The son of Marshal de Tallard is about to marry the third daughter of the Prince de Rohan; she is fourteen, very tall, and finely formed. Her elder sister, who is sixteen, will certainly take the veil, and wishes to become a nun. Mademoiselle de Rohan, the eldest of all, and who is eighteen, does not, on the contrary, wish to remain in a convent always; but she is not hurt at seeing her sister married before her; she is said to be handsome, but rather lame.

LETTER CCXXXII.

TO THE SAME.

Versailles, March 13th, 1713.

I KNOW nothing which can have retarded the departure of the Marquis de Montéléon, except the prorogation of parliament; but he will most likely set out very soon, since we are assured that the Queen of Great Britain will proclaim peace to-morrow, after which it will only remain to sign the preliminaries. I feel anxious for it on account of others; but the King will not be lead away by his exultation.

The correspondence which I have with you often tries my patience: it is not agreeable to talk of trifles to a person with whom one would rather wish to discuss affairs of importance, without any reserve.

I should never have thought that the accident of the Duke d'Aumont would have been treated so slightly in France and in England; it was spoken of for two or three days, and then forgotten.

The Pope's health is better, and Cardinal de Rohan told me some days ago, that he was going to pass the Easter at Strasburgh. I have only seen the Cardinal de Polignac for a moment. I know not the cause of his silence with you; but

he has not written me a word during his stay at Utrecht. Your conduct with regard to him is worthy of you ; if such a use were always made of the malevolent reports which one hears, they would not be so frequent.

Why do you think it strange that the seventh Mademoiselle de Noailles should marry the son of Marshal de Château Reynauld ? The father is a very good man ; the son handsome and clever ; as to the lady, she is also sensible and at the age of discretion. They are both rich. Château Reynauld is a fine estate, and the mansion well furnished. The lady will make a figure in Brittany.

I have done the very thing, Madam, which you cannot believe, by refusing the visit of the English ambassadress. Marshal de Villeroy saved me from that of the Elector of Bavaria. Have you the cruelty to wish me to keep my door open till I am at the last gasp ?

LETTER CCXXXIII.

TO THE SAME.

Versailles, April 24th, 1713.

I PITY you, from the sincere affection you have for their Catholic Majesties, in having such difficulty with regard to the education of your Princes. The French are affectionately attached to their

King; his is not a new domination; the subjects are of the same nation; their fathers and ancestors have served the predecessors of our Kings; they possess talents, courage, and science; but with all these advantages, I have more than once seen the difficulty which has occurred in the choice of preceptors. Never had a Prince more upright intentions than the King; when it was necessary to appoint a preceptor to the late Dauphin, he did not consult his own inclinations. He appointed M. de Montausier, who was virtue itself, but of so severe and austere a disposition, that I think he intimidated his pupil too much; he was surrounded in the subaltern offices with all that was thought best; the flattery which people are taught to use towards Princes from their cradle, was especially avoided; he had not an attendant but spoke to him more boldly and freely than he would have done to a citizen; but this may have contributed to his timidity. You saw the choice that was made of M. de Beauvilliers and M. de Cambrai; this cannot be disapproved of, when we look at the Duke of Burgundy and his Catholic Majesty. It seems to me, that from the manner in which your court is constituted, the Infants could not be so much separated as they have always been in this court, or left so much to their governesses. Would not the King, Queen, and yourself, form a good governor and governesses, in authorising, however, the

governor and preceptor that may be named? I once knew a man of great intellect, who maintained that men should educate females, and women the men. This maxim might be carried too far, but it is not without some reason; there are no women so rigid, with respect to coquetry, as men who wish the sex to be modest and reserved: there are no women who would allow youth the rudenesses and improprieties to which men scarcely attach any importance, and which are, however, very objectionable. I could wish, then, for a Spanish nobleman, a brave warrior, full of honour and probity, a preceptor, and not a pedant, possessing a mind adorned with everything that is most agreeable. The example of the King, the accomplishments of the Queen, the politeness and correctness of the *camerera mayor*, would do all the rest. It seems to me, this is a very excellent project. There is in your letter an expression, which shows me that I think like yourself respecting children, when you say that they should be spoken to rationally. I have two hundred and fifty whom I educate upon this principle, and with which I am extremely well satisfied. You are right in thinking that it is pleasant to hear the King speak of the little care that was taken of him in his youth; as he has got so well out of that period, he talks of it now very much at his ease.

Although we are assured that the Emperor will sign in his turn, I do not like to hear war still

talked of; everything is prepared for the German campaign, although all the court is convinced it will not take place.

LETTER CCXXXIV.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, May 7th, 1713.

It is true, that the Queen of England has conducted the negociation which gives us peace very ably, and that all these delays have been indispensable; there is now only the Emperor to sign, and nobody doubts his doing so this month. Our troops are nevertheless marching towards Germany; we had many farewells from all the officers when we quitted Versailles; but there was nothing sad in these, from the persuasion that we should soon meet again. Marshal d'Harcourt, who was to command this army, is detained at Marly, by one of those dangerous apoplectic fits, which return so often; his brain is sadly disordered, for he is aware that he cannot pronounce what he thinks, and that he says quite the contrary; his lady found him in this state on arriving from Normandy. It is a great affliction for Madame de Caylus, as their friendship was very sincere, and her children, who are nearly related

to Madame d'Harcourt, will lose much by his death.

I am very much disposed to approve of what their Catholic Majesties do; and moreover, it is quite my idea to divert young Princes as much as possible, from the familiarity of the women who surrounded them, and to speak to them rationally, not only at the age of five and a half, but even at three; for as there is nothing better than reason, it cannot be imparted too soon, especially if communicated agreeably, and so as to make an impression sooner than we can expect; I have experienced the efficacy of this plan beyond a doubt. I could wish with all my heart, that M. de Figueroa knew as much of it as myself; but I think that the King and Queen, as well as yourself, ought to take a great part in this important education.

LETTER CCXXXV.

TO THE SAME.

Marly, May 12th, 1713.

WE are sorry to see the army marching for Germany. Marshal de Villars succeeds Marshal d'Harcourt, who goes to the waters; he is convinced that his journey will not be long, and but

little embarrassed by this war, if it pleased the Emperor to continue it.

If my feelings are blunted, my reflections often represent to me the miracle which God has wrought in favour of our Kings, and the difference between the peace which we have just signed, and that of Gertruydenberg. The King appears as satisfied with it as you could wish, especially when he is at Marly, where he is much happier than at Versailles; he takes his walk in the morning, which is very conducive to his health; this is certainly better than could be expected, considering his age.

The Elector of Bavaria omits no opportunity of being with the King, and amusing himself; he joins all the hunting parties, and afterwards plays at lansquenet in the saloon, till two or three o'clock in the morning: the Elector is a very amiable Prince, and I heartily wish him every success.

LETTER CCXXXVI.

TO THE SAME.

Marly, May 29th, 1713.

WELL, Madam! this popular alarm, which seized me before any one else, becomes well founded, and we are now at war with the Emperor and the empire: our wisest heads have been

deceived, because they have reasoned on facts, and Prince Eugene and M. de Marlborough have yielded without reason. I am very sorry for it; the nations will yet suffer, and they stood in great need of being relieved: the King's repose will be troubled just as I thought he had began to enjoy it; and when he seemed to enjoy himself more freely than ever.

The joy arising from proclaiming peace is rendered incomplete by this remnant of war. The Duke de Tremes has given a very splendid entertainment at the Hotel de Ville. While I am writing to you, the King is hunting; Madame de Berri is in the landau with him, because she is prevented from riding by a slight bruise. The Elector of Bavaria is here, and will spend a part of the night in the card room. Ragoski is also hunting, but he does not play: he is quite of another turn; he likes to be alone, and wishes to inspect everything minutely, and appears very prudent in whatever he says or does.

LETTER CCXXXVII.

TO THE SAME.

Marly, May 31st, 1713.

I CAN easily conceive your joy on the arrival of the courier from Savoy: it is a great pleasure to

see the Queen in a state to enjoy a correspondence with the best of mothers, and who must have had great merit in beginning the education of our two Princesses.

It is true there is no need of books for meditation, for all that we daily see furnishes us with important matter; that respecting the Duke de Médina Cœli is very affecting: but we have seen such awful instances in persons who were innocence itself.

Whenever you are disposed to praise me for my capacity in the education of children, I shall receive it greedily; for I am really persuaded that I know something of the subject. I find you much less embarrassed than we about a governor, from the kind of life you lead. The King, Queen, and yourself, must do one half of his work; for I imagine that you do not abandon your Princes to governors, only seeing them ceremoniously for a quarter of an hour every week.

Peace will be proclaimed to-morrow in Paris: some ladies will go there from Marly; the rejoicings and Te Deum will take place on Thursday. With all this the Emperor declares war against us; we see the generals depart, to the great regret of the poor Duchess de Guiche, who had calculated upon passing the summer with her husband. You will not doubt but I feel this news more keenly than all the rest.

It is true that the Duchess de Berri wishes

to amuse herself; but she has yet a greater desire to have children, and I am convinced she will risk nothing upon that subject, for she is very capable of following up an object.

The Chevalier de Saint George is delighted with his reception at the court of Lorraine: we should yet see the restoration of this Prince, whose reputation increases daily: the Queen, his mother, lives retired at Chaillot, without any succour or consolation, except what God is pleased to give her. Marly takes me still further from her; if I continue as well as I have been the last fortnight at Versailles, I shall have the honour of paying her a visit.

LETTER CCXXXVIII.

TO THE SAME.

Versailles, June 12th, 1713.

My secretary is left at Saint Cyr, so that it is with my own feeble hand I must address you; I would, however, gladly attempt something still more difficult for you; but what could I not do, if there was a hope of seeing you! I think I could post it very well, but I should not look quite so well on arriving.

Marshal de Villars, by a precipitate march, has

taken a very advantageous position; military men appear delighted with it, and so am I, upon their word, as much as I can be during a war upon which I had not reckoned.

The description you give of my present, charms me; you know how to embellish everything; but you cannot be too well satisfied with my intentions towards you, from the distaff to the sovereignty. I fear lest this remnant of war should derange the grand affair.

I have thanked the King, in your name, for the lively interest he has manifested for you on this occasion; he thinks you ought to be quite pleased with him and M. de Torcy, with whom I have had a conversation respecting you; he affirms that you are well convinced he is also in your interests.

LETTER CCXXXIX.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, June 19th, 1713.

You know that I am ignorant of what prevents the couriers of the Marquis de Montéléon from arriving: the peace has been signed and the rejoicings have taken place so long ago, that I feel much hurt at your not knowing it before. I am equally dissatisfied with respect to the Ger-

man war, when you say that you do not believe the Emperor will act against us. All the best politicians of France thought so, and yet it has taken place; they now say it will not last long, and, perhaps, they will be deceived. I begin, however, to postpone my griefs till the evil day arrives, and to get rid of those which foresight creates, which are, certainly, often fallacious.

Marshal de Villars has set out full of hope; and, by a very quick march, he has seized upon all the advantages we could desire. He is preparing for the siege of Landau, and subsisting our troops at the enemy's expense; which will give great pleasure to M. Desmaretz, who has not all the money of which he stands in need. There is, notwithstanding, a great deal spent here; they play higher than they have done for a long time, and the Elector of Bavaria is constantly giving entertainments; the Dauphin returns them, and the Duchess, together with the Princesses, her daughters, furnishes every thing, showing the greatest activity.

But I must not forget, with regard to the Princesses, that their marriages are about to take place; I would relate some particulars respecting them, if they had not become public, and if I did not know you have a correspondence with persons here, better informed than myself.

I now only think of shutting myself up; I pass the days at Saint Cyr, and the evenings with the King: the Marshal de Villeroy and myself often

deplore our losses, and criticise all that is passing. We have hastened our journey to Rambouillet, because the dispensations will arrive from Rome by the time we ought to be there; and it is wished that the marriages should take place as soon as possible. We set out on the 26th instant, and return on the 1st of July.

LETTER CCXL.

TO THE SAME.

Saint Cyr, July 2nd, 1713.

THERE are many subjects upon which I could still say to you, no, I will not answer, &c.; but I must dispense with the consolation I should derive from unbosoming myself to a friend like you.

The best news I have to give you upon the journey we have just made, is that the King has attended the stag hunt every day since our arrival, although the meetings were three leagues off; the chaces, comprehending the time for returning, lasted six or seven hours, and the King was never better.

You will, perhaps, think less of the vigour of our Princesses, who have hunted night and day. The Duchess de Berri has risen often at three o'clock in the morning to hunt; but I must not

omit telling you that before we left Versailles, Mademoiselle de Bourbon and Mademoiselle de Charolais set out at five o'clock in the evening to go to Surène to play with the Elector, sup, mask, and dance till six in the morning, return to Versailles, go to their toilette, dress and accompany the King to the procession of the Holy Sacrament. I formerly saw such excesses as these once a year, but it is nothing now-a-days if they are not renewed three or four times a week.

Your Marshal de Villeroy has always continued at Rambouillet, but he leaves it to-morrow morning to endeavour to arrange a difference between the Count d'Harcourt and the Duke d'Estrées; it was wished to let it pass over quietly, but as it took place before ten men, and eight or nine women, it soon became public. It was at first reported that the Count, having had some words with the Duke, had given him a box on the ear. It has been since reported that the Prince said he did not strike him, and that if he had, he should reproach himself, because the Duke was very much intoxicated; the latter, affirmed, however, that he had been struck. This is now said to be the fact; I know not what will be said in the arrangement that is about to take place, and shall therefore drop the subject.

I know what I should do if you were near me, but I fancy it to myself as the most delicious treat: I should not then change my maxim to fly

the world, but I would persecute you, perhaps, as much as it does me, and we should both speak very harshly of it.

I am quite tired of forming a better judgment than wise men. We are at war; it begins well; you will have all the particulars from other quarters. Marshal de Villars hopes to manage so well, and with so much alacrity, that he will procure us peace.

The news of the King of Spain offering to command the French army on the Rhine has not yet arrived here; the hope of seeing this Prince afforded me at first an agreeable idea, but the first reflection has found this prospect more brilliant than useful.

The siege of Landau has already cost us M. de Biron, or at least one of his arms, which required immediate amputation, because it was splintered with a cannon shot; every body is sorry for it; his lady and his mother-in-law set out directly to join him; Madame de Nogent, M. de Lauzun's sister, wished to go notwithstanding her age, saying that she was no longer desirous of life, if her son-in-law died. Mesdame de Nogaret and d'Urfé are also much afflicted. I fear lest we may yet hear worse news; but the fortress is good, the garrison strong, the governor an honest and able man, all essential qualities for a vigorous defence.

The King sent M. de Lauzun to Chaillot to in-

vite the Queen of England to the marriages of the Princes, proposing to her to sleep at Versailles; she excused herself on account of the weak state of her health, and a debility which she had not hitherto experienced. I suspected the account of M. de Lauzun to be rather exaggerated; but Marshal de Berwick has fully confirmed it: I am going to Chaillot to-day to see her myself. It is a twofold cause of sadness for the Queen to know that her son has returned to Bar, which is a very disagreeable residence, and where I fear he is likely to remain some time; not that I am capable of judging whether peace or war will be more favourable to him.

LETTER CCXLI.

TO THE SAME.

Marly, July 17th, 1713.

It appears singular that you hear no more of your plenipotentiaries since they have been at Utrecht, which is certainly the spot that ought to furnish them with most matter to entertain you. We have heard of couriers being assassinated, and I believe that some of the malefactors have been taken up.

You are right in preferring peace to the advantages we might derive from war; I wish no

other to the King but that of tranquillity and the recovery of his kingdom, which is completely exhausted. The weather alarms us very much, for we may apprehend a similar famine to that of 1709.

The siege of Landau advances, and we have lost no person of consequence since the accident of M. de Biron, who is as well as we could expect.

I am convinced that Marshal de Villars will be fully sensible of the honour conferred upon him by his Catholic Majesty, in sending him the order of the Golden Fleece; nothing is more flattering to him than such a mark of attention from so great a King, and he will not fail to prize it highly.

It is true that I entertain great esteem for the Marquis de Brancos; he possesses wit, virtue, and great courage; and has, moreover, in my eyes, the merit of being very poor with high birth; there is really a pleasure in aiding and raising up those who are thus circumstanced.

I have seen the Queen of England; she is not well, but not so ill as I had been told. The good folks of Saint Germain rather exaggerate the injury she suffers from the air of Chaillot, because they wish to have her among themselves: but when there, she is overwhelmed with misery, and sometimes with reproaches from all those who surround her. She is partial to the sisterhood of Saint Mary, and passes her days in prayer: I

could wish it were not so near the heart of the King her husband, and that of the Princess her daughter.

LETTER CCXLII.

TO THE SAME.

Marly, August 6th, 1713.

I RECEIVED the letter which I expected by the post a week ago; but it came so late that I could not answer it, as the King was in my room.

It is very late to become wise, but I begin to be convinced that we should think but little of the future; experience should teach us that it is scarcely ever such as we had pictured to ourselves.

Marshal de Villeroi is satisfied with the reconciliation he has effected. The Marshals of France affirm that their tribunal has been recognized; while the Princes of Lorraine say that three Marshals, nominated by the King, do not constitute a tribunal; so that each party is satisfied with its own decision. I have not heard Cardinal d'Estrées mentioned in all this business; but I think, with you, that he must have felt it very sensibly.

I could wish the Queen had a little of the cold we feel here: we have not had two fine days during the whole summer. There are three Cardinals

here who constantly attend the King, and who are among the most assiduous of our courtiers.

LETTER CCXLIII.

TO THE SAME.

Marly, August 7th, 1713.

I AM so glad of what M. Voisins has just told me of the submission of the Catalonians, and of Barcelona itself, that I cannot defer congratulating you on it. I entreat you to present my homage to their Catholic Majesties, assuring them there is no person who is more interested than myself in their happiness, grandeur, and repose.

Let it not be said that you are the sole cause of the war being prolonged; I cannot believe it, and blame those very much who think so.

LETTER CCXLIV.

TO THE SAME.

Marly, August 13th, 1713.

YOUR proceedings are slow, and I attribute this to your being so distant from us. It is a long time since we have thought peace was made with

England and Savoy, but we have not yet arranged matters with the Emperor.

The siege of Landau is continued, and is expected to end between the 15th and 20th instant. It is true that we have not lost any persons of much importance, though many officers and soldiers; this has not arisen from the vigorous defence of the enemy, but the place is very strong, and the enemy have a number of mines, which oblige us to proceed cautiously. I think Marshal de Villars very praiseworthy for wishing to save his troops.

We think here that Barcelona has submitted, and that you enjoy profound tranquillity. It is true there never was so much money in France among people of business, or so little with the King and courtiers; we starve in the midst of plenty, but it must not be denied that the expences of living and play are excessive.

There are a number of ladies at Marly; we have so many Princesses and maids of honour, that there are quite enough without wishing for any more; but I have no objection to their coming, as I do not see any of them. I have already named those whom I have reserved to myself, for the dinner and musical parties which are given in my own apartments.

LETTER CCXLV.

TO THE SAME.

Marly, August 27th, 1713.

THE news changes so often, that I am obliged to adopt a different style every post. I begged you to offer my very humble respects to their Catholic Majesties upon the reduction of Barcelona; and we now hear of hostilities being about to take place there, and which may be prolonged from your want of the necessary means of carrying on the siege. We know also, that M. and Madame de Savoie are on the point of going to Sicily.

Landau is taken; and we are going to march to Fribourg, of which it is thought the siege will be equally long. The Marquis de Biron has been named Governor of Landau,—an honour which he has purchased rather dearly, for he still suffers much pain.

M. and Madame de Berri went a few days ago to the Opera, at the Fair of Saint Laurent, and to see the rope-dancing. There were sixteen ladies in their suite. They went through Paris in a number of coaches, attended by guards, trumpets, timbrels and drums; distributing money freely as they passed through the streets; there was not one of the sixteen ladies who did not receive a present

It is said to have cost Madame de Berri two thousand crowns; she expends her money very liberally, although I believe she is obliged to borrow it. The Princess de Conti and her sister, Mademoiselle de Charolais, accompanied Madame de Conti; but excluded the Duchess, formerly Mademoiselle de Conti, for whom she professes a decided enmity.

I have a female relative who had the misfortune to displease her: it is the Countess de Mailly, who has lately brought Madame de Polignac, her daughter, to Paris, but whom she found a little too much given to those excesses in pleasure which are but too prevalent there. She told M. de Polignac, if he wished to keep his wife at court, he might do so; but if he wished his daughter to remain under her charge, she must accompany her to Paris, where she was on the point of going. Madame de Polignac is eighteen, and very beautiful.

Madame de Beaumanoir is not dead, but it is said she cannot live long. The Queen of England came here yesterday, and appeared tolerably well while she was with the King; but immediately he went away, she burst into tears, which is not her usual habit. The King, her son, is persecuted on every side on account of his religion; and even the Catholics, who are near his person, wish to inspire him with extravagant notions. He has been also refused the securities which he demands; and

is reduced to a wretched state of existence; he is in want of money as is also the poor Queen, France paying very badly, and England continually postponing what has been so long promised.

LETTER CCXLVI.

TO THE SAME.

Fontainebleau, September 11th, 1713.

It was apparently a presentiment of what is now taking place which rendered us indifferent to peace: for it is impossible to rejoice when we reflect on the little that remains to us. However, as experience gives wisdom, I feel myself much more tranquil than I formerly was, and it seems to me that if I had to begin life again, I should be a little more reasonable and less anxious.

I do not think any new enterprizes will be undertaken in Germany; there are too many obstacles, and our ablest men assert that our affairs are in too good a condition to risk anything.

Nor do I perceive, from all I hear, that you can undertake the siege of Barcelona. I had heard wonders of the probity and piety of M. de Stahremberg; but I make great deductions since his quitting Spain, which does not by any means

correspond with the idea I had entertained of him. I think, with you, that one of the great misfortunes of our Princes is, not to be able to look after their affairs themselves, since this circumstance makes them dependent upon those whom they employ. I have seen many instances of it, and I think you know still more of the matter than myself.

The Elector is here; he resides with M. d'Antin in the garden of Diana; his Highness arrived there on Saturday, and began by playing cards with the Duchess till midnight; after which he made a party with Madame de Berri; these two being most calculated for each others society, both requiring constant amusement. He was yesterday closeted with the King: there was a promenade round the canal in the evening. The Duchess was on the water, Madame de Berri in a landau, the young Duchess in a coach, the Princess de Conti and Mademoiselle de Charolais on horseback, the King alone in his calèche, for he has not yet allowed the place of our Dauphiness to be occupied. I was not present at this fine sight, but in the forest with four or five ladies, who would not have enjoyed it more than myself.

I must say a word of Madame d'Orleans; she was in a coach painted yellow and light blue, with black horses and silver mounted harness.

LETTER CCXLVII.

TO THE SAME.

Versailles, October 23, 1713.

I HAD kept your last letter, to divert myself a little with you on the ingenious manner in which I attempted to get a present from you, and your penetration in perceiving it. I wished also to tell you that the King cannot bear *santaur* of China, and that he does not like fire-screens, because they disfigure a room; but I cannot enter into such details, when I know that their majesties are indisposed, and you in so sad a situation; you require all the patient qualities which God has given you to bear up against so many troubles; it appears that everything goes on better when you write, and there is reason to hope that the next news will be good, which, however, is not expected without some uneasiness. I have none but good to tell you of the health of the King and the Dauphin, which is the sole joy of good Frenchmen and honest people. The rest does not go on so well, and I am not without my share of suffering.

The assembly of the clergy begins well. Cardinal de Noailles is very anxious for the peace of the church, and Cardinal Rohan, who presides at the commission, is prudent and moderate. I have

been in a feeble state since I quitted Fontainebleau, having had more repose there than here, which is a circumstance that greatly affects my health; that of our holy Queen of England is in a bad state; she is extremely ill, and so dejected, that she seems more dead than alive. A poor person in her situation would excite great compassion; she is very much alone; the absence of the king, her son, fills her with grief and affliction; they are both in great want of money, being very ill paid by France, and not at all by England, who promised to do so more than six months ago.

LETTER CCXLVIII.

TO THE SAME.

Marly, November 5th, 1713.

I SINCERELY hope we shall take Fribourg, but it will not be so soon, nor so easily effected as had been thought, because the governor, who showed so little vigour at the beginning, appears now resolved to defend himself to the last. An assault was to be made on the 1st instant; if it has taken place, we shall know the result to-morrow. The principal magistrates of the city, together with the ladies and many persons of quality, who had retired to it with their effects, have waited

on the governor, preceded by the holy sacrament, to intreat him not to expose them to pillage, and all the consequences of an assault; he answered, that it was not yet time to surrender, and ordered himself to be carried to the breach, notwithstanding his gout, to ascertain personally the state of the works.

If the Emperor is as obstinate in continuing the war as in facing the plague, we shall have no peace, for it is said that he absolutely refuses to quit Vienna; but we are assured that the contagion diminishes.

It is true that Marshal de Villars is making a glorious campaign: he has his faults, like other men, but he is very much attached to the King and the state, and one of the most able of our generals.

I can easily conceive why you did not answer the long letter of Marshal de Villeroy. I think you have done much to absent yourself from the Queen's room while you write to me.

November 6th.

M. de Contades, Major of the Guards, has just arrived with the news that the city of Fribourg has been taken without any assault; the half-moon was carried, and only a single lieutenant killed; the governor retired into the castle. But you will hear a better account of the affair from others. The Queen of England returns to Saint

Germaines to-day through pure complaisance ; she is not required to remain in the place that is the least disagreeable to her.

LETTER CCXLIX.

TO THE SAME.

Marly, November 20th, 1713.

I HAVE no letter from you, but you have one from me, which cannot however indicate to you our astonishment and affliction at what is passing. I leave it to those who are capable of making the reflections called forth by the conduct of the Catholic King, and on the consequences which it may produce throughout all Europe ; I confine myself to your particular interest, which makes me suffer as much now, as it afforded me joy a week ago : never did surprise equal that of your friend and mine. God grant that you may repair everything that you have spoiled ; it is impossible for me to speak of any thing else.

END OF VOL. I

Maintenon

The secret correspondence of Madame de Maintenon with the princess
DesUrsins from the original manuscripts in the possession of the duke of
Choiseul

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